

Didier in *The Zoist*

D.J. West & M.R. Barrington, 2004

Alexis Didier (1826-1886) was a clairvoyant who demonstrated remarkable psychic feats while in a state of mesmeric trance. Reports of his abilities that appeared in the journal *The Zoist* (1844-1853) and in Edwin Lee's book *Animal Magnetism* (1848) have been assembled for the SPR Online Library in order to make this material easily accessible to psychical researchers.

The scope and importance of the Didier oeuvre can be judged from Barrington's review of Bertrand Meheust's comprehensive book on Didier, *Un Voyant Prodigeux* (2003). This review, first published in JSPR vol 68 pp 173-176 (2004), is included here by way of introduction to this material.

BOOK REVIEWS

UN VOYANT PRODIGIEUX—ALEXIS DIDIER, 1826–1886 by Bertrand Méheust.
 Les empêcheurs de penser en rond, Paris, 2003, 473 pp. Name index. 21
 Euros.

Alexis Didier appears to have been one of the most remarkable clairvoyants of all time, and it is shocking that his name means nothing to most adherents of psychical research—including myself until this book came my way. Anglophones tend to disregard research written up in a foreign language, but in the case of Alexis (usually referred to by his given name to distinguish him from his brother, Adolphe, also a psychic) there is in fact a body of reports written in English. It is however far from accessible, being in mid-nineteenth-century issues of *The Zoist*, a scholarly publication held in the SPR library at Cambridge, but perhaps before long these reports may become available through the Online Library.

Bertrand Méheust, a philosopher and a leading member of the Institut Métapsychique International of Paris, has published extensively in the field of hypnosis and clairvoyance, and this book, a wide-ranging study of a so-called *somnambule*, was sponsored by the Centre Nationale du Livre. Alexis was known as a somnambulist because he functioned as a clairvoyant exclusively when he was 'magnetised', i.e. put into a hypnotic state by mesmeric induction. Alexis and his mesmerist, Jean-Bon Marcillet, were a business team, and made a good living from Alexis's clairvoyance, which of course raised suspicion in the minds of many of his clients—until they had experienced a sitting, after which they usually came away astounded and convinced concerning the reality both of mesmerism and of clairvoyance.

Méheust starts his book with an account of a sitting taken from *The Zoist* of 1851, relating the experience of an English clergyman, Revd C. H. Townsend, who was a personal friend of the editor, Dr John Elliotson, a professor of medicine at University College Hospital. This report is a call to attention that makes the remaining 462 pages of the book required reading by anyone prepared (if necessary) to settle down with a large French dictionary. Méheust notes more than once the greater detail provided by English researchers in their reports on encounters with Alexis, and the circumstances of Townsend's sitting make it particularly resistant to any attack based on the hypothesis of research into the sitter's background by a bevy of accomplices. Townsend was (*inter alia*) a poet, art collector, a friend of Dickens and expert on mesmerism, but he did not enjoy international fame to the degree that a well-informed clairvoyant would know the details of his house furnishings. He met Marcillet for the first time on a visit to Paris, and as he was to leave France the next day he asked if he could have a sitting that same evening with Alexis, who was also unknown to him. Marcillet obligingly took him to the quarter where Alexis lived, and caught Alexis returning home from the theatre. The sitting took place immediately.

Marcillet allowed Townsend himself to 'magnetise' Alexis, and then left them alone together. At Townsend's request Alexis gave him accurate descriptions

of his town house and his country house, and then focused on his paintings—all, he said, modern except two, and those two were a religious group and a seascape. He described the religious painting in detail (it was of St Anne teaching the young Virgin Mary to read) and when asked what material it was painted on he identified it as a painting made on dark coloured stone (it was a slab of black marble), and added the unusual detail that it was concave. He described an ornate mirror in which he could 'see' paintings reflected, among them one of a horse lying down and a man with a wheelbarrow; taking a closer 'look' at the horse, Alexis said that the poor beast had some sores on his flank.

When Townsend produced a letter sealed in an envelope for psychometry Alexis described the lady who had written it, correctly stating how long Townsend had known her and in what connection; he went on to describe the lady's sister, and then wrote down the full name of her father. Alexis's rambles around the past life of the sitter and a network of his friends and family closely resemble the clairvoyant excursions of Stefan Ossowiecki nearly a century later.

After this appetite-whetting Prologue the book is set out in three parts, Part I being devoted to accounts of Alexis's prowess provided by a wide variety of clients, many of them highly sceptical before the event. With most sitters he started with a repertoire of tests. People would bring books, and when they held them unopened (and sometimes with pages uncut) Alexis would usually be able to quote a phrase that would be found on a named page. Regularly he would play, and win, a game of cards while blindfolded. This is the sort of experiment where an expert conjuror can use his skills to detect chicanery. The famous magician Jean-Eugène Robert-Houdin attended two sittings with Alexis, the first because he was engaged by the Marquis de Mirville to report on his findings, and the second on his own initiative because he was so stupefied at finding himself obliged to report to the Marquis that no trickery had been used. After the second sitting he went further and declared roundly that Alexis was a genuine clairvoyant. The exploits of Alexis aroused considerable interest among English visitors to Paris, and in the mid-1840s he gave both private and public demonstrations in England.

The highly detailed distant viewing of house interiors was a strong feature of Alexis's clairvoyance and was sometimes put to practical use, an example being the recovery of a parcel of francs sent to Chopin in the last year of his life. When he did not acknowledge receipt, the two English women benefactors who had sent the money did what was apparently natural—they consulted Alexis, who correctly located the parcel, still intact, as he said, in a chest of drawers at the foot of the bed in the apartment of the concierge, who when confronted and told the exact location of the article 'remembered' the allegedly forgotten parcel. On another occasion a working woman consulted him about her daughter's illness, and on top of giving medical advice he warned that she would suffer a long separation from the child—who some time later was in effect abducted by a wealthy woman who failed to return her after taking her on holiday. The woman was tracked from place to place by Alexis, and the child was finally restored to her mother. Alexis always refused to foretell the future, but on this occasion he seems to have done so unasked.

Part II consists of commentary on the material presented in Part I, and the subject is illuminated by some perspectives on the contemporary scene and on

the historical development of mesmerism and the somnambulism associated with it. A subject that receives considerable attention is the endorsement of Alexis by Robert-Houdin, and the desperate efforts made by the latter's biographer, Michel Seldow, to deny the reality of that endorsement. Robert-Houdin had made quite a sport of exposing fraudulent psychics, and had declared that all somnambulists were tricksters, so it could not have been easy for him to confirm that Alexis was a genuine clairvoyant. Seldow's attempts to explain this away were on the lines that the magician did not mean what he said, that he was humouring the Marquis, that he was being ironical, that he did not want to cross an aristocrat, that he was too kind to expose a poor struggling colleague, and that correct answers were lucky guesses, most statements were wrong and anything apparently inexplicable was due to trickery (presumably too expert for Robert-Houdin). In the light of Robert-Houdin's two reports, widely published and publicised by de Mirville, these arguments take absurdity to fresh heights, and Méheust, dispassionately assiduous in this as in all other areas, pulls them apart thoroughly.

In Part III the output of Alexis is put through a very fine sieve, with every possible argument that could be marshalled against acceptance examined at length and with rigour. Was Alexis a master conjuror, one who was able to hoodwink Robert-Houdin? Could sittings such as the one with Townsend be explained in terms of accomplices, fishing and chance? In seeking to sift the rock-hard evidence from the 'gilded legend' aspects, Méheust is a severe critic, and shows himself ready to throw away quite an array of babies with the possibly contaminated bathwater. The final section of this part of the book is revelatory in citing descriptions of Alexis's behaviour when he was striving for his clairvoyant vision, and in considering the implications of his achievements and his failures. There are arresting descriptions of Alexis at work, showing him to be quite physically engrossed in the task of empathising with persons concerned in the clairvoyant task. He would often seize the sitter's hand, and seemed to register on his own body sensations that linked him to the distant person or event; and when given a psychometric token object he did not just handle it and knead it, but would sniff it, hold it to his throat and mouth, and even lick it.

Méheust perceptively observes that it is through errors and partial failures of a master psychic that we may learn something about paranormal cognition. One partial success was when Alexis was asked by the director of the institute where he was demonstrating to give the title of a book (*Histoire des Girondins*) placed by the director in a certain position in his office. The only information that Alexis could give was that there were three words, and the middle word on the second line was 'des'; the long word on the top line started with 'H' and the long word on the third line ended with 's'. If he had given the target word for word, as he might well have done on another occasion, we could only marvel, but from this imperfect performance we can see him working with visual images (the words) rather than with meaningful concepts (the title), and this *modus operandi* again closely resembles that of Ossowiecki. In other cases the striving suggests an effort to recover an elusive memory, and we see Alexis clutching at associations that might steer him to the target, which must already have been lurking somewhere in the lower reaches of his mind.

In an epilogue Méheust arrives at very restrained and conservative judgments: on the one hand, he says, we can conclude that Alexis probably did demonstrate paranormal cognition; on the other hand we could conclude that it is not possible to say now whether he did or did not. I hope that this excellent work will appear one day in English, so that more of our members can read it and decide the issue for themselves.

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ALEXIS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ZOIST.

Sir,—I was much gratified at witnessing some of the highest phenomena of mesmerism at the residence of Dr. Elliotson on Monday last, in the case of M. Alexis, and conceiving that your readers would be interested with a description of them, I forward a short account of what I saw for insertion in your journal.

M. Alexis, probably 18 or 19 years of age, was placed in a reclining chair, and his mesmeriser, M. Marcillet, stood at a distance of a yard from him, and gazed intently at his eyes. In about a minute the patient began to exhibit twitchings of the whole body and slight convulsive movements of the face, and then gradually fell off into the mesmeric state, which was deepened by the operator making a few longitudinal passes from the head downwards over the body. Before the state of clairvoyance came on—for this appears to come on gradually, and to increase in power the longer it continues—M. Marcillet produced a stiffening of the different extremities, and removed it at pleasure. So powerful was this, that as the youth sat in his chair with the legs extended horizontally, a gentleman present stood upon his unsupported thighs apparently without inconveniencing him. After a very few minutes, the operator having declared his patient to be in a state of clairvoyance, two of the visitors proceeded to bandage his eyes; first placing a quantity of wadding over each eye, they tied a handkerchief tightly round his head, two other handkerchiefs were then tied diagonally one over each eye, and different visitors having satisfied themselves that vision in the ordinary way was impossible, it was proposed that he should play a game of *écarté*. Dr. Elliotson having sent out for a new pack of cards, the youth opened them and began discarding the small cards; this he did as quickly as if his eyes had been uncovered. I observed that he discarded two *sevens*, but these were his only mistakes. Captain Daniell was his opponent, and he played a game with perfect correctness. I next sat down myself and played a game with him, but by this time his powers seemed to have increased, for he frequently played without turning his cards, merely spreading them before him on the table with the backs upwards, and I detected only one mistake, such as might have occurred to any one—he discarded a trump card. Mr. Jerdan next took the cards, and now the youth showed that he could tell cards in his opponent's hand as well as his own. A large folio book was then placed upright on the table, so as to form a screen between the players. Mr. Jerdan dealt, and played his cards behind this screen, so that it would be quite impossible for any

one in their relative positions to see the card played in the ordinary manner. Alexis, however, played to him without a single error.

Some books having been brought up out of the Doctor's library, a volume of Montaigne was placed in Alexis's hand, which he opened at random, and after holding it for a few seconds before his face, placed the book in the hands of a bystander, and read correctly a line which he pointed at. A large book of plates, &c., was then opened before him. Alexis described correctly one of the plates, and then taking a handkerchief from the table, as he turned over the leaf with one hand he with the other drew the handkerchief across the page in a heap, so as to cover a great portion of the letter-press, and asked the bystanders which part he should read. I myself pointed to a spot which was covered with several folds of the handkerchief, and immediately, without any hesitation, he read a whole line correctly.

M. Marcillet next proposed that he should describe some plates held at the back of his head, but these experiments were only partially successful, as was afterwards the case when he attempted to point out the situation of the hands of watches by turning only the backs of them towards his eyes.

Captain Daniell took his hand and requested Alexis to go mentally with him into the drawing room of his father's house and describe it. Alexis described correctly the situation of the door, windows, fire-place, &c., the colour of the curtains, the number of ornaments over the chimney-piece, the number and situations of the pictures, &c., &c., and his attention having been directed to a particular picture, he described the subject of it. Captain Daniell thought him wrong at the time as to the colour of the curtains, but I have seen a note from Captain Daniell, stating that on returning home he found that Alexis was right.

The Hon. Edmund Phipps afterwards tried a similar experiment, but I understood Mr. Phipps to say that he was not equally successful.

Colonel Gurwood took Alexis's hand, and after reminding him of some information he had received from him relative to a French officer, whose life the Colonel had saved at the siege of Badajos, asked Alexis if that information had enabled him to find the officer. Alexis replied in the affirmative; but added, "You have not seen him." This was correct. Colonel G. asked Alexis where the officer now was; he replied, "In the South of France." This was correct. Alexis went on to describe the person of the officer, but as Colonel G. had never seen him since, the accuracy of his replies cannot yet be tested. Colonel G. asked him the name of the officer; he did not know. The Colonel put a completely folded letter into his hand, and on being told that it contained the signature of an officer, he demanded a pencil and paper. On being supplied with these, he said he would write the name. He wrote *B*, and then waited as if to hear whether this was correct; Colonel G. said "Yes." He then wrote *a*; "No;" he instantly corrected himself, and said, "Oh, no, it is *o*." "Yes." He went on to write, *n, f, i, l, e*. The name was *Bonfilh*, so that there was a slight mistake in the final letter, but such a mistake as might easily have been made by any one, after an imperfect view of a name; and to me afforded the greater proof of the genuineness of the experiment; he had never opened the letter.

I send you simply a statement of facts, the truth of which I can vouch

for ; and I may add that from the way in which the experiments were performed, there was no possible room for collusion or deception of any kind.

I am, Sir, faithfully, &c.,

EDMOND SHEPPARD SYMES.

38, Hill Street, Berkeley Square,
June 28th, 1844.

Mr. Atkinson was in the evening with Mr. Phipps, and wrote the following account to Dr. Elliotson, which we are allowed to publish.

"The Hon. Edmund Phipps, brother to the Marquess of Normanby, took hold of the hand of Alexis, who described his house in Park Lane in many points with singular correctness ; but what was most remarkable, he said, among other things, that he saw a picture of a battle opposite the fire-place in the drawing room,—he saw men on horseback with spears and helmets, describing the whole very distinctly and correctly, and particularly insisted that there was a figure in the centre of the picture with a crown on the head and a truncheon in his hand leading on the battle, which Mr. Phipps denied, but the boy insisted that he was right, and that if Mr. P. would look when he went home, he would find it, for that he saw it distinctly. I dined with Mr. Phipps that evening, and we examined the picture together, and found that the somnambulist was quite correct, as well as with respect to some curious points described in another picture, which Mr. Phipps had never remarked before, but of too striking and curious a nature to be the effects of a lucky guess. Mr. Phipps was a sceptic, but is now satisfied of the lad's extraordinary powers of clairvoyance."

We are enabled, from the account of eye witnesses, to make the following statement.

Alexis was mesmerised at the house of a nobleman on Thursday ; and any one of the company who compared what he did then with what he did at Dr. Elliotson's, will see additional reason to be satisfied of the integrity of him and M. Marcillet. His eyes were not satisfactorily bandaged in our opinion ; the bandages were well placed but not firmly, so that after a while *perhaps* he might have seen if he would. But he played badly ; doing what nobody else could have done who did not see, but making blunders every now and then, not one of which he would have made had he seen like other people and been an impostor. A word was written on paper and then so carefully folded that to see it was impossible. He after great difficulty made it all out. He first made out *d* and *a*, and was long divided between *m* and *n* ; twice he pronounced the whole word, and twice doubted ; but at last felt sure and fixed on *Danton*,—which it was. The gentleman who wrote the word was the only person who knew it.

The power was on Alexis at times only ; coming in gushes or flashes, as forced states of the living body do ;—pain, convulsions, flashes of light, noise in the ears, emotion, and even the inspirations of genius. This should be carefully remembered. The state is a forced state : and though, if strong, it is more uniform ; if weak, it will flicker. It must also be remembered, that he unfortunately thinks aloud ; names each appearance and thought as it presents itself to him, and therefore seems to guess ; whereas he is like

a man reading an ill-written letter, or looking at very distant objects,—who fancies one word or object and then another, till at last he is satisfied what the real one is. He, therefore, is often apparently in great error when he first speaks; and, though nothing be said by others, he goes on correcting himself. It would be well if clairvoyants said nothing and had nothing said to them, till they felt themselves certain.

Another point to be attended to is, that these effects come slowly like the movements excited mesmerically beyond the patient's sight, and which also are often incorrect at first, like clairvoyant thoughts, as Dr. Elliotson has remarked (*supra*, pp. 55 and 212, and vol. i., p. 423); and therefore full time should always be allowed for the results, as Dr. Engledue says in the account of his equally wonderful case of clairvoyance (*supra*, p. 269); and Dr. Elliotson in regard to movements, in vol. i., p. 423, and *supra*, p. 55.

A drawing of a house was placed behind him, and he at last correctly described it as a house of two floors and four windows. The half-length portrait of a preacher in a gown was placed behind him, and at last he correctly stated that it was a half-length portrait of a man with a strange tunic, and his hair drawn down at the sides, though he once fancied he saw a crown upon the head. When asked what sort of eyes they were, he instantly replied, "There are spectacles and large ones too;" and this was all correct. Another drawing was placed behind him, and he at once correctly said that there were two lines of words beneath it. With two drawings he failed, and would not consider them long enough to judge accurately. A large portfolio was placed before him, and he said it contained only a piece of paper doubled together, and of a certain size, and placed in a certain part,—in all which he was perfectly correct. But the following trial astonished every one. Two lines were enclosed between two leaves of paper, and these were put into an envelope. He did not read the whole, as he did two lines through a doubled pocket handkerchief at Dr. Elliotson's, but he named two words of the whole, and declared he would stick three pins into each. On taking the leaves out of the envelope and opening them, it was actually found that he had named the right words, and stuck three pins accurately into each. Lastly, a book was presented to him, enclosed in three sheets of paper, and he read aloud the words *Le chemin de fer*, which were upon the cover. The words were not at all discernible through the envelopes, and the sensation in the company was extraordinary.

This we will firmly vouch for to our readers, that there is not the least attempt at deception or unfairness: and we beg them to compare Dr. Engledue's case of clairvoyance recorded in this very number.

under the operation, was that of a person in a troubled sleep, but there were no indications of suffering,—not the slightest compression of the lips or distortion of the features;—and after being removed to her bed, and restored to consciousness, she said she had an indistinct recollection of dreaming that something was being tied round her leg. It may, perhaps, help to remove from the minds of the sceptical, any doubts they may entertain of the young woman's honesty, under the trying circumstances through which she has passed, to state that we have been favoured with the testimony of a gentleman of the highest respectability occupying an important situation in the town, as to her artlessness and integrity, he having had repeated opportunities, since the application of the mesmeric agency in her case, of noting her character and manners, which he describes as modest and intelligent,—and considers her a person whom it would be impossible to suspect of simulation under the circumstances."

I was going to comment at length upon this great fact; but I will not. The Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society of London, Sir Benjamin Brodie, Dr. Marshall Hall, Dr. Copland, the professors of University College, London, and the lecturers of all the medical schools, the physicians and surgeons of all the hospitals, the fashionable physicians and the unknown, but worldly-wise, practitioners who go their daily rounds gossiping their ignorant nonsense against mesmerism, together with Mr. Wakley and his poor imitator and successor Dr. Forbes, will comment upon it for themselves, and will feel their own humiliating position.

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

Sept. 1844.

JOHN ELLIOTSON.

X. Dr. Forbes and Alexis.

IN our last number we criticised the conduct of Dr. Forbes during the preceding five years. In our present number we shall review some portion of his conduct during the last few weeks. On a former occasion we did not hesitate to affirm that the course he had pursued was unscientific—nay, dishonest, and we gave our reasons, not be it remembered founded on the opinions of others, but on the written opinions of Dr. Forbes himself. Recent events have not caused us to alter our views. We are sorry that Dr. Forbes did not follow the advice we honestly tendered. How different would have been his position! Perfectly reckless, and profoundly ignorant of the science, he has rushed to witness a display of mesmeric

wonders, and without a knowledge of the facts connected with mesmeric sympathy—without preparing beforehand the course which he intended to pursue—for he in the most barefaced manner explained away the success of his own experiments,—without seeking the advice of those who could have given him information on the subject, he associated himself with men who were opposed most violently to the reception of mesmerism, men like himself, who were committed by writing against what they had not investigated. The whole party went not for the purpose of learning, but for the purpose of finding fault—not with the scientific object of investigating a difficult and perplexing subject, but for the purpose of pronouncing a patient an impostor,* if he failed; when any one at all conversant with mesmeric research could have told them *that for days together patients will fail, and that the cause of such failure may be by no means apparent.*

In our previous article we hailed Dr. Forbes as "*Wakley secundus*"—little did we think that he would so soon furnish us with evidence to again prove how correct we were in our designation. One short month, and lo! he presents his compliments to his prototype and requests the insertion of his discoveries in the *Lancet*!

"Dr. Forbes presents his compliments to the editor of the *Lancet* and will be obliged by his giving a place in his journal to the accompanying paper.—Old Burlington Street, July 27th, 1844."

The editor of a quarterly journal himself, he could not wait to insert in his own pages the great discovery that Alexis was an impostor, but anxious to blazon to the world his exertions, he solicited the assistance of a weekly journal, and thus proclaimed the result of his experiments. The daily press contained advertisements announcing the stupendous fact, that the next number of the *Lancet* would contain a second complete and fatal explosion against mesmerism, by Dr. Forbes. The *Medical Gazette* published the same announcement, and thus a powerful machinery was put into motion, in our opinion, to prove that Dr. Forbes had again committed himself, not only by denouncing what he did not understand, but by unfairly reporting experiments which he himself originated. The *Medical Gazette*, in a leading article, said "Dr. Forbes has the honour upon this occasion of having

* "That, consequently, this exhibition not only affords not one tittle of evidence in favour of the existence of this faculty in the man Alexis, but presents extremely strong grounds for believing that the pretended power in him is feigned, and that he is consequently AN IMPOSTOR." *Dr. Forbes' Letter to the Medical Gazette.*

stripped off the flimsy veil of imposition, under cover of which these mountebanks attempted to deceive the public. There never was exhibition so pitiful—never exposure so luminous—never defeat so complete, as that to which the notes of a second exhibition published in this day's *Gazette* refer." To us who have seen Alexis and thoroughly investigated the case, who have cases of our own, and who have so frequently witnessed the extraordinary results obtained by fellow-labourers, such language raises a smile, and causes us to pity the men who are led away by the opinions expressed in the medical journals, and who, thinking that the writers have the best possible means of acquiring information, retail the absurdities in all directions.

A friend of ours after perusing the papers by Dr. Forbes, immediately said, "I have derived from these letters a most profound conviction that Dr. F. believes in the power, the evidence of which he so much racks his ingenuity to disprove;" and in corroboration of the justness of our friend's conclusion, we may mention that from information which has reached us we know that Dr. Forbes believes that there is "something" in mesmerism; but we ask any one who has read his two reports, whether they could *by his admission*, ascertain this fact? We know that on several occasions he has admitted that there must be a good deal of truth in the science—why then, we ask, has he not stated the same publicly? If he had done so in his note to the editor of the *Lancet*, it is clear that *the exposure of Alexis* would not have found admission in that quarter, and thus one of the avenues by which he was

"To climb the steep ascent that leads to fame's proud temple,"

would have been closed.

He says: "I require no other proofs of its existence than are deemed essential in every other department of natural science; but while these are denied me, it is no fault of mine that I remain a sceptic." Who denies him the proofs? Is not nature free to him? Can he not work out a course of experiments for himself? Why go to see the cases of other men? Why not obtain a case for himself? Such conduct is disgraceful. Apply his argument to the common affairs of life—to a discovery in his own profession, for instance. A medical man in India discovers that a certain medicine given in a certain manner, and in a peculiar combination, produces beneficial and extraordinary effects in a peculiar disease;—Dr. Forbes does not try it; he does not investigate the matter. Oh! no, he exclaims, "If he will not come home from

India and show me how to use it, *it is no fault of mine that I remain a sceptic!*" In the course he has thought proper to follow we discover the proceedings of the professional trickster, and not the endeavours of a scientific man to enlighten his own profession. We see a manifestation of secretiveness, an impulse which the members of a liberal profession should endeavour to suppress when engaged in the investigation of a subject *said to be*, and which we say *is*, of the greatest importance.

We are advocates for the adoption of great prudence before a man gives his opinion regarding a disputed point, and Dr. Forbes may consider that he has been particularly "*canny*," but we warn him, for we have no hesitation in saying that he will live to regret the use of the language in regard to Alexis, and if he has the feelings of a gentleman he will be too glad to retract it.

But how is it that Dr. Forbes should be the only one to detect the legerdemain of Alexis? How is it that amongst the hundreds that have seen him, the convicted "false prophet" should be the only man who could detect such glaring deception? How is it that the physician who, in 1839, declared that the whole affair was nonsense,—"*that from the first dawn of these diverting but degrading scenes to the last,*" he had expressed "*his hearty, entire, and unconcealed disbelief*" of the phenomena,—how is it, we say, that *five years* after, this self-same physician should stealthily creep out and attend one of these "*diverting but degrading scenes?*" What can have been the motive power that caused *this* "dreaming physician" to move? What? We could give a guess, and we could depict the motive by the use of a very expressive word, but we will merely suggest a query. Can fees have anything to do with it? The editor of the *Lancet* told the thousand sons of Esculapius in Modern Babylon not to meet Dr. Elliotson in consultation, and the poor things obeyed the orders of their master. Dr. Forbes "presents his compliments" to the same authority, tells him he has proved Alexis to be an impostor, and thus insinuates in the most quiet manner that the editor of the *Lancet* will perhaps tell the medical men to reward him for the labour bestowed, and the acumen! displayed on the late memorable occasion. A physician to royalty allied with the coroner for Middlesex, for the express purpose of retarding the reception of a great truth, is a subject to which we cannot do justice, without condescending to use language with which we should be sorry to blot the pages of our journal.

But Dr. Forbes shall speak for himself, and so shall M. Marcillet. We wish our readers to understand that the letter

of the latter gentleman in the *Medical Times* has never been answered !

Dr. Forbes says :

"A gentleman (I believe Colonel Gurwood) presented to him something very loosely wrapped in paper. He felt it, and said it was a box (*boîte*). He then himself removed the paper, and laid the apparent box (a small octagonal body, with gilt top) down on the table. He was then asked what it contained, he said, "Some characters in writing." While he was saying this (or previously, I don't now recollect which), he had *perfect opportunity*, as the object lay before him, and was touched by him, and was constantly looked at by him—I say, he had a *perfect opportunity of opening the book* (for such it was), so that he *might* see the characters within it. I cannot say positively that he *did* open it; but anybody, not a juggler, *might* have done so unobserved. He then announced that it was some writing in characters he did not understand. The book proved to be a copy of the Koran, in Arabic. This experiment was clearly a failure; first, because, *while covered*, he declared the *book* to be a *box*; and, second, when the paper was removed, there was—to say the least—no *impossibility* of seeing the contents in the natural way."

To this M. Marcillot returns the following answer :

"The only question of great importance here, is, whether there was this 'perfect opportunity.' Alexis was watched by several persons. Dr. Forbes, with his eyes, his spectacles, and his prejudices, was watching: the book, or box, was obvious: the youth was under every one's eyes: how then could there have been a '*perfect opportunity*?' And if there could have been a '*perfect opportunity*'—how could it have been made use of without observation? And if made use of, how happens it that neither Dr. Forbes, nor anybody present, witnessed it? These are plain, common sense questions; and, if not answered satisfactorily, it follows that Dr. Forbes is so '*philosophic*' in his judgment about clairvoyance, that he asks people to give up their common sense (he can't give up his own) rather than believe it. But, Sir, the statement is not wholly true, as Colonel Gurwood (no worse in judgment, surely, than the Doctor) will prove. The MS., in truth, from the peculiarity of its covering, might strictly be said to be in a box; and Alexis, in the eyes of all, and without any opening (a thing obvious enough if done), declared that it was a curious kind of book—not in English or French, but '*ARABIC—and in gold letters*;' and Colonel Gurwood, an old soldier, of no mean literary ability or shrewdness, declared that the description was correct to the letter. The book, he added, had just been presented him by the Duke of Wellington."

Again, Dr. Forbes reports the following experiment :

"A lady (evidently a strong believer, and very friendly to Alexis) put herself in *rapport* with him, and produced a large box, like an overgrown book, card-case, or a case for holding a small prayer-

book, (opening like a card-case in the middle.) He took it in his hands and felt it, and turned it about. He was asked what it contained; he said, after a brief pause, something *gilded* (*doré*), and then said, a watch (*montre*), and added, that, 'what was curious, the glass was broken.' The lady was surprised at this, and said it was *not* broken when she gave it him. On opening the box by drawing off the top, sure enough there was a watch on one side, *with the glass next the outside*, and the glass was broken! Nothing could be clearer than that he *might* have broken the glass through the yielding case, or felt the broken glass, or heard or felt the watch *tick*, and thus come at once to know that it was a watch, and a watch with a broken glass! I believe this was the fact, but, at any rate, it must be admitted that such a clear-seeing as this *might* have been accomplished by anybody, and therefore the experiment goes for nothing."

But now for his honesty and his great discrimination. M. Marcillet says:

"Now, first, as Dr. Forbes elsewhere insinuates that this lady with others formed a band of confederates, I may briefly say, that she was an English lady of title, and that another lady, declared by Dr. Forbes to be a French lady, and insinuated to be another confederate, was equally a native of England, and perfectly a stranger to me. The Countess, for such she was, presented a stout case, like a large octavo volume, and the watch was *exceedingly* small—was *not going*, and was covered with cards. It was under these circumstances, that first, it was declared to be gold—then a watch, and then to have its glass slightly cracked (*filé*), not broken. To the surprise of the lady, on closely examining the watch that had been so carefully hidden, an almost imperceptible crack or scratch could be discovered. And this, says this clairvoyant doctor, was 'the clear-seeing that might have been accomplished by anybody.'"

We must give one more of Dr. Forbes' experiments:

"At length, after many attempts, I succeeded in getting a lady (a friend of Alexis, and favoured by him) to take one of my boxes, and put him to the test in my own way. She was put *en rapport* with him, but he would not attempt to read the word written within upon finding that *she* did not know what it was. She then went to one side of the room to examine the word, and I just arrived near her in time to see her take from the box the word, and look at it, *surrounded by many of the company*. *This was done openly*, and though I at once felt that this circumstance was sufficient to vitiate the experiment, as it was *quite possible*, and indeed, extremely probable, that some of Alexis's friends might see it wholly or partially, and make him acquainted with it. However, I begged the lady to allow me to replace the word in such a manner that it could not easily be seen, even if the top of the box (a small paper wafer-box) were removed. Well, she returned to Alexis, and gave him the box. He looked at it long, and at last said inquisitively, "*Un mot*

de cinq lettres!" then seven, then eight, and at last *five* again, adding, "I am now sure it is five." I begged her not to tell, and partly succeeded, though it was obvious she was desirous of *helping* him all she could. At last he said that the word ends with the letters *ion*, and tried hard to get the lady to help him out with the rest. If I had not constantly interfered, I saw clearly that he would have bothered or bamboozled her out of them. He then wrote on a paper *ion*, then tried several prefixes to suit, and at last seemed to settle on *motion*, or some word like this, but one certainly ending in *tion*. Two o'clock having now arrived, I was obliged to depart before the box was opened, but I was thoroughly satisfied that some one of his *friends* had had a glimpse of my word (it was in *large print*), and had told this to him. It was, however, a word not of five, or six, or eight letters, but one of *ten*, viz., '*Discussion*.'

And now for the answer. M. Marcillet says:

"The facts of the case are these. Feeling that there was a want of sympathy between Alexis and the doctor—a natural repulsiveness, which no practical mesmerist has not often met with—it was agreed, on both sides, that the English Countess should be placed *en rapport* with Alexis. If the doctor be not a greater fool than he thinks himself, no communication could, by any means, have been made to Alexis, and he certainly watched his cherished box with no little vigilance; yet the youth fixed the four last letters (*nion*—not *ion*) of the word enclosed in the box—no very ordinary feat, surely. He was then going on to name the other letters, when the doctor, having had too much of it, retreated behind the front bench of spectators; *u*, *s*, followed, and now the doctor beat his retreat; the whole word '*discussion*' was then given. Now, this was the doctor's own experiment; it was most decisive; yet he had not the courage, or good-will, to sit it out."

It is unnecessary to review the whole of the experiments, for we consider these three sufficient to prove the *great care* with which Dr. Forbes chronicles facts;—the *great candour* with which he works them up for publication, and the *great value* that is to be placed on the results of his anti-mesmeric crusade. The result of his investigations is exactly what we should have predicted. When Alexis is successful, Dr. F. is constantly suggesting the possibility of his *seeing in the ordinary way*,—of his *looking sideways into books*,—of his *reading books in an ante-room, before the experiments commenced*, and so on. But the question is, did he or did he not adopt these means? It is perfectly ridiculous, after *suggesting* a series of experiments, and when some are successful, to declare them unsatisfactory. The fact is Dr. Forbes labours under a natural defect which prevents him from becoming an acute observer. *If there is any truth in cerebral physiology, we will*

hazard the assertion that Dr. Forbes experiences great difficulty in recognizing his patients, and the greatest difficulty in ascertaining by external appearances the diseases under which they are labouring. We feel convinced that he might have *twenty or thirty* sick in the wards of an hospital, and that it would be a work of very great labour for him to become acquainted with the history of each case, so as to recall it and attach it satisfactorily to the individual before him, at his daily visit. And in confirmation of our opinion, we have heard it stated that when he was secretary to the Mineralogical Society of Cornwall, he was never able to detect the different characters of minerals, and that he has frequently referred to the want of this power, as being a great peculiarity in his character.

“They who on public stage uncalled appear,
Must take the fortune of the theatre.”

Now, surely, Dr. Forbes is not the individual we should select for the purpose of investigating a doubtful and intricate physiological question. When a man gratuitously advances his opinion, and proclaims that all who have preceded him in witnessing, and believing in, the powers of Alexis, are *enthusiasts and fools*, it surely becomes us to enquire into the power possessed by the individual to enable him to come to such a sweeping conclusion. And when we find that he is unfortunately, by nature, incapacitated from becoming an acute observer, and when to this decided want of qualification, we add the fact, that *facts* have not been recorded, we cannot refrain from stating that the two papers published by Dr. Forbes are perfectly valueless in a scientific point of view, and perfectly harmless as regards the effect they will have on intelligent and inquiring men.

But Dr. F. is a philosopher. Who will dare to say he is not after the following specimen?

“In concluding these hurried notes, I think it right to state that, even now, I only avow myself a sceptical doubter—not an utter disbeliever, as to mesmerism. I am still open to conviction when such evidence of its truth is afforded me as is deemed necessary in any other scientific inquiries. The things I have myself seen most assuredly increase very materially the doubts before entertained; still I do not regard them as sufficient to prove the utter falseness of mesmerism: they prove nothing more than their utter insufficiency to prove its truth. Even the positive truth of trickery and collusion on the part of its professors, however, would afford no sound reason for declaring it to be false. Like medicine,

or any other branch of natural science, it may be true, although it be professed and practised by charlatans, cheats, and rogues. Give me the same kind of proof of *clairvoyance* that I have of other scientific truths, and I will believe it."

Bravo! Dr. Forbes. By and bye when the tide turns, and you publish your "*jesuitical article*" recommending mesmerism to the consideration of your brethren in a future number of the *British and Foreign Review*, print in large type the above extract, proclaim with editorial trumpet that you always said there was "something" in it;—that although you said Alexis was an impostor, you were not "*an utter disbeliever*,"—that although you said Marcillet was a trickster and an abettor of collusion, you had "*no sound reason for declaring it to be false*." To this place the date, July 11th, 1844. But do not forget to insert the following extract from another of your articles, bearing date April 1st, 1839.

"To devote an article to the consideration of animal magnetism, now that the *English practitioners are one and all ashamed of its name*, would be a work of supererogation, if the delusion, unabashed, were not yet parading itself over some parts of the continent; and if its return to these shores, and to our own hospitals and colleges, at any future period, were quite out of the question. But if we can quicken *its decline*, where it now reigns in the hearts of nervous proselytes and *dreaming physicians*, or, can assist in forming a barrier against a probable revisitation of it, we shall not think the otherwise more than due attention we have given to the wild productions which treat of it, entirely thrown away."

Exactly *five* years appear to be required to enlighten you a little bit. We will indulge in a prophecy:—you will move a little faster during the next five years Dr. Forbes.

E. W. C. N.

We subjoin the following answer to Dr. Forbes by an eye-witness, who is evidently as honest as he is sensible, and declares himself not to be a mesmeriser. It was intended for the *Lancet*, but upon second thoughts sent to the *Leicester Journal*, which had printed Dr. Forbes's rubbish, and published on the 30th of August.

I was present at the *Séance* in Mortimer-street; I followed most closely the experiments there performed, and, with most of the spectators, I came to a very different conclusion to that of Dr. Forbes. He may be more clever than we are in detecting imposture; let it be so, for the sake of hypothesis. But how is it that he is not

clever enough to convince us of our error? Because, influenced as he was by strong prejudice, and a full determination to oppose animal magnetism, against which, it will be remembered, he had previously written, he misrepresented almost every fact that took place. However, granting to Dr. Forbes honesty of purpose, in the hope that he will make the same concession to us, I proceed to my task.

Nos. 1 and 2 refer to the tetanic state of the somnambulist. Of this I shall take no particular notice, as it was not presented, *at the time*, as being of very great importance, and, consequently, no experiments were proposed to prove the insensibility of the subject.

It should, however, be observed, that this state is a most interesting one in the mesmeric sleep, as it is during its continuance that the most painful operations may be performed without the patient's knowledge; it proves, in fact, the use and merit of mesmerism.

I begin in earnest with No. 3.

"He seemed to play readily and well, winning the game," &c. Why not have said—He played readily, &c.? Because Dr. Forbes thinks there was a "possibility" (Mark this expression, if you please, which is the pivot on which the account is constantly revolving) "of sight being exercised in the ordinary way." This I beg to deny. Supposing, as he is represented to have done, that Alexis did repeatedly touch and shift the bandages, still, as the handkerchiefs decidedly remained over the eyes, he could not have seen in the ordinary way, on the *OTHER* side of the table. Dr. Forbes should have candidly stated *how* the eyes had been bandaged: I must rectify the omission. A piece of wash-leather was *gummed* over each eye, a handkerchief being bound across to keep it firm; besides which, the eyes were separately covered by another handkerchief transversally tied, and over them all, a fourth one was made fast; and, in spite of all these precautionary measures, Alexis played readily, and won every game. On being requested to find a given card from a pack scattered on the table, with the figures down, he repeatedly, in my presence, turned at once the required one. I have myself, several times, taken a card from a pack bought a moment before, and the card thus taken, has been instantly named, without one single failure.

No. 3 concludes by—"At any rate, the evident (to me) possibility of sight being exercised in the ordinary way, totally vitiates this card playing as an experiment."

I have proved that there was no possibility of sight when Alexis named the cards with the figures down, told those in his adversary's hands on the other side of the table, and, again, those which I myself, and others, took promiscuously from a pack just bought; and I am, therefore, entitled to say, that I have fairly dislodged Dr. Forbes from his third position. But, before I allow him to take refuge in No. 4, I must beg of him to remark, that he had assumed

this pretended strong position upon the mere *suspicion* of a possibility—not a shadow of detection is there.

In answer to No. 4, reading in a book through a certain number of pages, I call Dr. F.'s attention to the *fact* that Alexis, on that occasion, read several words through a gentleman's hand placed over the page, and that this gentleman was, to all intents and purposes, a very strong unbeliever and opponent, for his rude behaviour drew forth the hisses of the company. If I am not much mistaken, Dr. F. was close to him at the time. Why does he leave out this successful experiment, which completely confutes the notes *a. b.* appended to No. 4, in which he says that "Alexis hunted over many pages, and was satisfied if he found the word named anywhere," since, in the experiment I mention, he could not turn one single page, as he was required to read through the hand in a book placed *at once* before him.

Here, according to Dr. F. the result was inconclusive; but he does not say that it was conclusive with regard to the supposed imposture. Still no detection. Let us, then, pass to No. 5.

"The next set of experiments referred to his power of reading words wrapped in paper, placed in a box, &c."

Under letter *a*, Dr. F. says—"A gentleman, I believe Colonel Gurwood"—(It was, in fact, Colonel Gurwood who permitted me to examine the book presented to Alexis, and to unfold and refold the paper in which it was wrapped)—"presented to him something very loosely wrapped in paper. Alexis, after having at first said it was a box, declared it to be a book, containing some writing in characters he could not understand. The book proved to be a copy of the Koran in Arabic." "And," adds Dr. F., "Alexis had a perfect opportunity of opening the book, so that he might see the characters within it. I cannot say that he did open it, but," &c. &c.

Dr. Aliquis has had a perfect opportunity of killing a great number of his patients; I cannot say positively that he did kill them, but, &c.

M. Quidam, a gentleman well known for his respectability and honesty, had lately a perfect opportunity of stealing some objects of virtú of great value; I cannot say positively that he did steal them, but, &c.

Where did Dr. F. learn this kind of syllogism? Surely not in Locke's school?

M. Marcelet, who, in the *Medical Times* of July 27th, passes a few remarks, perhaps in too severe a style, on the misrepresentations contained in this account, says, with respect to this perfect opportunity.—

See this already quoted at p. 397, *supra*,—"The only question," &c.

And on the strength of this perfect opportunity, Dr. F. would condemn, or at least accuse, a man of having picked a pocket—not because any one saw him guilty of the act, but because he had a perfect opportunity of so doing!

How can you, doubters and unbelievers of mesmerism, allow your sense and understanding to be obscured by such sophistical reasoning?

No detection yet!

"*b.* A slip of folded paper was given him; he fairly said, after many attempts, he could not read what it contained."

"*c.* Another paper, (it might be the same,) &c.; he returned it to the lady that it might be unfolded," &c.

"*d.* One of these packets, (I now recollect it was the one I saw opened by the lady,)" &c.

b. c. d. evidently refer to one and the same paper, which Alexis could not read. Why the Doctor wishes to make it appear three different failures, is best known to himself. But, as it is not pretended that Alexis reads every word that is presented to him, I need not insist upon this.

"*e.* A lady (evidently a strong believer and very friendly to Alexis) produced a large box, like a case for holding a small Prayer Book. Alexis said at first that it contained something gilded, and then said it was a watch, and added, that, what was curious, the glass was broken," &c.

Dr. Forbes remarks here, that "Alexis *might* have broken the glass through the case, or felt it, or heard the watch tick, (if it was going, which he *cannot* assert.)"

I positively affirm in answer, that the watch was *not* going at the time, and that Alexis did not say that the glass was "*cassé*," broken, but only "*fêlé*," cracked. On closely examining the watch, a very small crack was observed, to the surprise of the lady herself, who was not aware of it. This lady, whom the Doctor wishes to represent as one of the confederates, was, according to the information I received, a young countess, a native of England, who then saw Alexis for the very first time. To accuse her, and so many others, of "*comperage*," is to suppose, either that M. Marcillet can dispose at will of all the riches of Peru, or that these compeers are bought at a very cheap rate indeed; for their number is increasing every day, and they are to be met with among the highest classes of society in England and France. And I pray Dr. Forbes to pay particular attention to this remark: not one of them has yet turned against the briber and declared the imposture!

No detection,—I should call this, on the contrary, a decided success.

"*f.* A gentleman came forward with his two hands closed, and requested to be informed what they contained. Alexis took the hands, turned them round, and I saw him distinctly separate them a little," &c.

At last we have something which Dr. Forbes positively saw. But to his assertion, I might answer in his own style, that as there is a *possibility* of his having been mistaken, he did mistake, and saw nothing. However, not to forget for one moment the temperate tone I have prescribed to myself in writing this letter, I shall only remark, that Alexis must have used some pretty considerable force to succeed in opening the hands, ever so little, or else, that the gentleman was another of those innumerable confederates; and if Alexis used force, how is it that the inquirer did not immediately

complain of it? But I submit, that the experiment is not fairly stated. To the best of my recollection, it proceeded thus: first, Alexis declared the colour of the object to be reddish, which it was; then, he said it might be a pocket-book, and added, that there was some printing in it, with a word of five letters above two lines in smaller characters. On this, the gentleman said that there was nothing in print or writing in the book. Alexis maintained his point, and the gentleman put the book in his pocket, expressing, at the same time, some kind of regret at the mistake. However, on some of the company requesting him to look inside, he found in it one of his visiting cards, which circumstance he had really forgotten, as appeared from his surprise at the correctness of Alexis. The card bore effectively the name of this gentleman, printed in larger letters than the address, which was underneath, and in two lines as described by Alexis. The success of this experiment elicited a burst of applause from the company. But Dr. Forbes, passing of course over this little incident, says that it was *possibly* a guess; a possibility again—a suspicion expressed about a fact acknowledged and applauded by all present.

“*g.* At length, I succeeded in getting a lady to take one of my boxes, and put him to the test in my own way,” &c.—“Two o’clock having now arrived, I was obliged to depart before the box was opened; but I was thoroughly satisfied that some one of his friends had had a glimpse of my word, and had told this to him. It was, however, a word not of five, or six, or eight letters, but one of ten, viz., discussion.”

I beg to borrow here the answer of M. Marcillet to the above misstatement, from the *Medical Times*, July 27.

See this quotation at p. 399, *supra*,—“The facts of the case,” &c.

I know he says, that he had an engagement that obliged him to depart at two; but the engagement was not very pressing, and was certainly not kept, for elsewhere he says, “that his very long narrative was written *immediately* after the meeting.” Dr. Forbes himself writing the word *immediately* in italics.

I have gone through every paragraph of the account, and we shall now see what are the conclusions drawn by Dr. Forbes from all these possibilities. I find them summed up in No. 7, as follows:—

“It must be admitted, that this exhibition presents extremely strong grounds for believing that the pretended power in Alexis is feigned, and that he is consequently an impostor.”

Although Dr. Forbes has not been able, in one single instance, to detect the pretended imposture, and has no other “extremely strong grounds for believing that the power is feigned,” than mere possibilities, yet he has the assurance to call impostors, cheats, and rogues, (as may be seen in the concluding part of his paper,) men of honour and respectability, many of whom, having in view no pecuniary reward whatever, have produced the very same phenomena in the course of their investigation of the science of animal magnetism. Well, indeed, may M. Marcillet and others feel indignant

at the ungenerous treatment they receive from such men as Dr. Forbes, and well may a writer in the *Phreno Magnet Vindicator* be excused for giving vent to his feelings in the following strain:—

“Suspicion always haunts the guilty mind. Have you ever seen a man skulking through society, imputing bad motives to every one, always suspecting others, and insinuating his whispered slanders against them, seeing every one through a dark and selfish medium, be sure that man is a rascal. Don’t talk to us of his superior discernment, his knowledge of the world, his experience in character, you may be sure he is none of these; it is, that he thinks he sees in every one else the reflection of himself. You may rest assured of this, you never knew a man who had a low opinion of others, who professed to talk of the badness of human nature, but he was himself destitute of those generous impulses which give energy and beauty to character.”

Dr. Forbes may there see how easy it is to return an ill compliment, and will, perhaps, after having read the above, remain well convinced, that by the very same reason that the preceding “tirade” does not prove all those who suspect others of acting a deceitful part, to be themselves guilty of the like conduct; so Dr. Forbes does not prove Mr. M., Dr. E., and so many highly respectable and talented individuals to be cheats, rogues, and impostors, on the mere possibility of their being so.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.

Such, Sir, is the letter I intended to address to the editor of the *Lancet*. I am much obliged to you for allowing me to present it, with all its imperfections, to the readers of the Journal.

Permit me to trespass a few moments longer on your time, to add a word or two respecting M. Marcillet’s departure from London. It has been stated, that he left suddenly, in consequence of the failure of the experiments in Mortimer Street. In answer to this charge, I will relate the substance of a conversation which took place between us a *fortnight* before the *Séance* in Mortimer Street. On my requesting M. Marcillet to visit this town, he replied, that it was not his intention to go into the provinces this summer; that he should return to France in two or three weeks, as his business there would require his presence. However, on my pressing him to come to Leicester, he consented to make it an exception, provided I could secure an audience for him. Unfortunately, the two or three weeks fixed by him, had elapsed before my answer could be ready, and he left London at the time he had intended. The precipitate flight of M. Marcillet is then, in my opinion, only one more of the Doctor’s possibilities.

The *Critic*, an able and honest literary periodical, which appears every other Saturday, and should be taken in by all friends of mesmerism on account of the talent and zeal with

which it regularly supports the science, has the following account in its number for August the 15th :—

1. Dr. Forbes first *admits* the extraordinary rigidity of the muscles. But, he adds, that anybody could do this with practice. Has he tried? If not, is it fair to meet a fact by a bare assertion?

2. He *admits* that Alexis “played an *écarté* with his eyes bandaged. He seemed to play readily and well, winning the game. He also told the cards, at times, in the partners’ hands; but he also repeatedly failed, and made glaring mistakes in his guesses.”

These are the doctor’s very words. Would not these admissions seem to establish the facts he denies? And how does he answer them? By the shabby evasion of expressing a doubt whether he could not see under the bandages. If he thought thus, why did not Dr. Forbes, as he was in duty bound to do, examine the bandage and satisfy himself. Or why, before he thus tried to answer a fact by a conjecture, did he not tie a similar bandage over his own eyes and try if he could play cards with rapidity and win the game, and tell the cards in his adversary’s hands? Then, and not till then, would Dr. Forbes have been justified in saying that *thus* the wonder was performed.

He omits altogether the fact that Alexis named the cards with equal readiness, though a book was placed as a screen between himself and his opponent, and that he played his own cards correctly as they lay upon the table with their backs upwards.

4. The next experiment was reading in a book *through* a certain number of pages. Dr. Forbes does *not* assert that this was not done by Alexis, he only says vaguely that the result was altogether inconclusive. 1st, because the words were not always immediately below the point; and, 2nd, that he turned over the leaves before the question was asked, and could have seen sideways.

Now what wretched trifling is this. Again, the best test would be a trial by Dr. Forbes himself. Let him turn twenty leaves as slowly as he pleases, and not sideways, but opened flat before him, and then let a spectator point to any spot, and we would wager fifty to one that the doctor would not name the words under that spot once in a hundred times.

5. He details various experiments referring to the power of reading words wrapped up in paper, in boxes, &c.

Colonel Gurwood produced a parcel; Alexis said it was a box. But it was a book. On being asked what it contained, he said some characters in writing. Dr. Forbes says he *may* have seen this. But here again is an attempt to answer a fact by a conjecture. That he answered rightly is certain; that he peeped is a vague assertion of a mere possibility. We ask if this be a philosophical mode of investigation.

A folded paper he did not read, and he offered to prick the dot of the *i* of one which contained no such letter. But these occasional failures give the best assurance of the reality of those which succeeded. Had there been imposture or collusion, there would have

been no such failure, for he could have accomplished these experiments as easily as the others.

The next experiment exhibits the doctor's unfairness most glaringly. A lady produced a box, and asked Alexis what it contained. He first said something gilded; then that it was a watch, with the glass broken. The lady said that could not be, for it was *not* broken when she put it in. On opening the box, the glass was found to be as Alexis had said. Dr. Forbes explains this by *conjecturing* that Alexis must have broken the glass himself!!

A gentleman then put a red morocco pocket-book between his two hands. Alexis told him it was a small thing, reddish, with white inside, that he so held. Cards were in it. The doctor admits there was some "small success" in this, but that it was "possibly a guess." Again a *possibility* set up against a fact.

Dr. Forbes then tried a box he had himself brought. He admits that Alexis told him there was in it a word that ended in *ion*; but he was unable to make out the rest. The word *was* "discussion." But before this is pronounced a failure it is necessary to know whether the word was so plainly written that a foreigner would be likely to distinguish the spelling, and it is to be remembered that, whatever the *modus operandi*, certain it is that the perceptions of objects invisible to the eye in its ordinary state are dim in proportion to the density of the media through which they are seen. Hence the hesitations and occasional mistakes of the patient.

But the doctor concludes this report with a candid remark, that "even now I only avow myself a sceptic or doubter, not an utter disbeliever—as to mesmerism." This is all that can be required of anybody. A minute report is added in the *Lancet* of a second exhibition. On this occasion, Alexis was not blind-folded. A large music-book was placed between him and his adversary at *écarté*, and this is the *doctor's report* of the results:—

"*First Game.*—Alexis made a mistake in commencing the first hand, by desiring his opponent to play a *spade*, and he stated that his opponent had *four trumps* in his hand, when he had *not one*. In the second hand, Alexis said that his opponent had *the ten*, which he had not; but he stated, also, that he had *two trumps*, which was correct; and also that he had *the seven*, which again was correct. In the third hand he was again mistaken with regard to the *trump card*, which he said was a *diamond*, when it was a *spade*; but although he was wrong in regard to the trumps, the cards afterwards fell as he had previously said they would fall. In the next hand the trump turned up he said was a *heart* when it was a *spade*. He then asked for *five cards*, when he only required *three*. In the next hand Alexis was correct in statements *four times*, but was *wrong in three*.

"*Second Game.*—In commencing the next game, Alexis was mistaken in the *trump*, and also in the *number* of cards wanted; and, on the whole hand, he was *twice correct* and *twice in error*. In the second hand the cards were played with *their faces downwards*, when Alexis was again *mistaken in the trump*. In the third hand he was mistaken in the *number of cards wanted*, and he stated he had played a *red card* when he had played a *black one*. He now threw up his hand on the supposition that his opponent had the best cards, when, in fact, he himself had the means of winning the game, having the odd trick in his own hand."

Again, we say, that no *guessing* could accomplish this. Let any

person who questions it try if by mere guess he would be as often right as Alexis was admitted to be. The mistakes are obviously those which would be made by a person who *perceived imperfectly*, not by a mere guesser at truth.

On this occasion many experiments were tried upon the alleged power of naming words in books at a point touched. Some of these failed; but others succeeded, and one of them in a remarkable manner.

On this occasion he failed also to read some papers inclosed in boxes.

But these are no proofs of a fraud. All who have seen mesmerism are aware that its powers vary vastly, not only at different seasons, but almost from moment to moment, and the perceptions are sometimes as dull as they are at other times acute. Enough of its *rationale* is not known to enable us to ascertain the conditions under which it operates, and therefore to judge it fairly. Any number of failures do not affect its truth, provided any one of its phenomena be real, and it is by what it does, and not by what it fails to do, that the science, if we may so term it, is to be tried. Dr. Forbes fairly admits this in his concluding comments.

"In several cases, both on the present and former occasions, his guesses (if such they were), even when not correct, came curiously near the truth,—as, for instance, when he named the exact number of letters in the word in the envelope. The failures and blunders, however, were so egregious, and so unaccountable, on the hypothesis of the existence of a *through-seeing* faculty, that they must stagger the most credulous when fairly examined. Still, as was observed on the former occasion, the results being only *negative*, prove nothing more than that nothing was proved. It only remains for the mesmerists to adduce one or two *positive* unequivocal proofs, to put aside all our negative ones. Such proof however, is, I believe, yet to be exhibited; and until it is exhibited unequivocally,—that is, under similar guards and precautions as the failures now recorded took place,—I, for one, must still remain a doubter at the very least."

The number of the *Lancet* containing Dr. Forbes's attack was advertized in all the papers as distinguished for this article, and the editor boldly told the world it was "a complete exposure of M. M. Marcillet and Alexis," and that their two exhibitions which it reported had put them to flight.

This was perfect untruth. The youth was overworked by M. Marcillet, and his health so impaired that he was losing his clairvoyance, and there was no chance for him unless taken back to France without delay.

If Dr. Forbes had no share in this false announcement, it would have been to his credit to tell the world as soon as he saw it, either that there was no truth in it or that he had no share in it. For his comfort, and that of his allies, we have the pleasure to inform Dr. Forbes, that Alexis will be here again in the spring.

VI. *Reports of various trials of the Clairvoyance of Aleris Didier, last Summer, in London.*

COLLECTED BY DR. ELLIOTSON.

In the fourth edition of my translation of *Blumenbach's Physiology*, published in 1828, I devoted three pages to a very faint sketch of mesmerism, not professing any belief in its wonders, but saying that some of the elementary results were very probable and supported by good testimony, but remarking that one would at once ascribe them to imagination, and, as to the higher phenomena, I must examine them myself before I believed, "Having never seen the magnetic phenomena, I have no right to pronounce judgment; but before I can believe these wonders, I must see them" (p. 292). Yet in a review of the work, I forget in what journal, but it was a monthly journal, and not medical, and I saw it at the United University Club, the writer expressed his surprise that a sensible man could *believe* such nonsense.

When I had seen enough of mesmerism to assert it was true, but up to 1837 not more than to speak of the production of sleep, sleep-waking, rigidity, &c., and the prediction of changes in the patient's own complaint,—the *Athenæum* asserted that I had jumped all at once to a belief in all the wondrous assertions of mesmerists. It was not till 1841, that I saw, or ventured to assert, the occurrence of vision with the eyes firmly closed: nor was it till the present year, 1844, that I witnessed, or ventured to assert, the fact of that highest degree of clairvoyance, in which a person knows, as by vision, what is going on at a great distance, or can tell what has taken place or will take place in matters not relating to his own health or own affairs, but to various events in the lives of others.

In my *Physiology* in 1838, I said that "I should despise myself if I hesitated to declare my decided conviction of the truth of mesmerism," meaning the more elementary phenomena; and that I would stand ridicule with firmness and silent pity or contempt, till I should see, as I should, the truth of mesmerism established, p. 656.

In the same work at p. 1633, in 1840, my words were, "I not only repeat my firm conviction of the truth of mesmerism, but of the truth of many facts in it upon which I formerly gave no opinion, because I had not then witnessed them, and was determined to remain neutral upon any point upon which I myself did not witness facts."

This year I have met with exquisite clairvoyance of the highest kind for the first time, and its truth I will now as fearlessly maintain as I originally did the production of simple sleep.

For six years I have made repeated trials with numerous patients of my own: but never have found one who I was satisfied could even see the objects about them with the eyes closed, or look into the interior of the bodies of others and state their condition and prescribe for them. But among my searches after clairvoyance I have at length found one example of the highest kind, just mentioned in the last paragraph, though she disclaims all clairvoyance of the inferior kind mentioned in the present paragraph. This patient is the perfection of integrity and every other moral excellence. Her word is a fact: and her truth is not less absolute than her freedom from vanity. She dislikes to exert her clairvoyance, and though, I have no doubt, long possessed of it, never mentioned it till I tried and urged her to exert it: nor would she ever exert it but from a desire to oblige me, nor does she if aware of the presence of others.

She will accurately describe who are in a particular room at her father's house at a particular moment, and the arrangement of the furniture, &c.—a distance of above fifty miles: or she will search for and see a member of her family, and describe the place in which he or she is, and the others also present. I at length succeeded in prevailing upon her to see some others, not members of her family, or known to them or to herself, and whose names even I did not mention, but only a very few particulars about them. She has described their persons most accurately, the places in which they were, their occupations at the moment; and told what others were in the same room with them: and all this when I knew nothing of the truth at the time, and had to verify it afterwards. Far more than this she would tell: and tell with perfect accuracy: and predict numerous things relating to others which have since exactly taken place. But I will not venture to add more at present. I am anything but superstitious; am indeed very sceptical of human testimony, on all matters of a wonderful nature: but these points I have laboriously and rigidly looked into, and can speak positively. In exerting this power, she knits her brows and wrinkles her forehead vertically, evidently making a great *cerebral* exertion. The part at which she says she *sees*, so to speak, clairvoyantly, is the centre of the forehead, midway between the temples, but a little lower than half-way between the root of the nose and the top of the forehead,—exactly at

the spot called by some cerebral physiologists the organ of Eventuality. Gall discovered an organ about this part, the function of which he termed the *Sense of Things*: Dr. Spurzheim split it into two horizontally; the lower for the knowledge of individual existences, calling it Individuality: the other for occurrences, calling it Eventuality. Whether *eventuality* is legitimately made from *event*, and not rather from *eventual*, which refers not to bare events, but ultimate results, I will not now enquire: his sesquipedalian coinage of *Philoprogenitiveness* certainly does not signify love of offspring, as he intended, but the love of begetting offspring. But I have never seen any grounds for his division of Gall's organ of the Sense of Things into a faculty for individual existences and another for occurrences, any more than I have seen reason for some other of his alleged discoveries, although most of those who adopt phrenology from observing its general truth and some particular truths, adopt all the organs and faculties talked of by the book-makers and bust-makers, who all follow him: just as most persons who adopt the Bible from being satisfied of its general truth, would adopt a few more chapters or verses here and there, if they were interpolated, without ever thinking to doubt. The fact of this patient seeing all the things which she inwardly sees at the higher part of the organ of the Sense of Things adds to my doubts of the accuracy of the lower part of the organ being destined for the knowledge of individual existences as distinct from occurrences. She describes the representation of objects to be mainly at the seat of the so-called Eventuality; but as faintly running a little upward and a little to each side beyond its admitted seat: and indeed nothing can be more absurd than to draw lines round the seats of the organs. The centre only of each organ should be marked, and its general course or shape may be shadowed out: but lines of demarcation are calculated to give very wrong ideas of limit. Though I could excite the organ of Friendship in her by touching over it, even when she was in attacks of insensibility and perfect ignorance of my person, I never could in any circumstances affect any other organ: and never assisted her Clairvoyance by placing my finger upon any part of the organ of the Sense of Things: nor could I enable her to perceive absent persons when the power was inactive, or increase its strength when active, by putting the point of a finger upon the Sense of Persons: nor enable her to judge better of the period at which the events she predicted would come to pass, or those which she stated to have happened had taken place, by placing my

finger upon Time. Her power of judging of the period of the various results is slight.

I need hardly say that in perceiving absent and distant persons and things, it makes no difference what may be the direction of her face. Her seat may be placed against any of the walls of the room without altering her ability.

A remarkable peculiarity in this case is, that the perception of absent objects scarcely occurs unless I hold her hands in mine. If I hold but one hand in one of mine, the faculty is by no means so strong as if I hold one in each of mine. This I discovered accidentally. Sometimes while distinctly seeing a person in a distant county, her father for instance, she suddenly would cry out, "Oh papa's gone; I can't see him now." On taking hold of her hands again, merely with the view of encouraging her, she would say, "There now I see him again." It was some time before the real fact struck me. But I was so often in the habit of holding her hands, one in each of mine, to encourage her to exert the power and to increase her general mesmeric state, that at length the vanishing of the objects when I let go her hands, and their returning on my holding her hands again, struck me: and I proved the thing fully and made further experiments. The difference between holding one or both hands I have mentioned. But I further found that I must hold her right in my right and her left in my left. If I hold her right in my left, or her left in my right, she sees objects double: if I hold her right in my left, and her left in my right, at the same time, objects are quadrupled; and this terrifies her exceedingly. These observations and experiments I made in silence, without a single remark to her; and she was long in ignorance of them; nor did she know them till after satisfying myself of their truth I mentioned them to her. She was surprised, and observed for herself and found my observations true.

Even the power of telling past and future events in reference to others, is greatly increased by my holding her hands each in the corresponding one of my own.

Whether from her being in a very delicate state of health or not, she exerts the power with great effort, and often requires repeated efforts in the same direction at successive sittings before she sees what I desire her to see. Any temporary increase of debility, any headache, or other distressing sensation, or the slightest uncomfortable emotion, prevents its exertion to much purpose or altogether. Before she could discern persons who are strangers to her, many attempts for very many days were required. She then saw them more

clearly every day. Sometimes she can see persons but for an instant at a time : and sometimes not more than once in this momentary manner during my visit. She seldom saw the whole of a room at once.

All this shews how unreasonable it was to suppose Alexis could succeed on every occasion and off hand. He was in good health and strong : but his master worked him two, three, and even four times a day, in spite of the remonstrances of those who understood mesmerism, of which he, like too many exhibitors, knew but little. People expected that this delicate and exquisite power was always present in the same full force, and he could do all at command as a boy can tumble over head and ears or make a somerset. They forgot that far less delicate powers are disturbed and annulled by annoyances. A fine vocal or instrumental performer, an actor, or orator, is likely to fail, if persons surround him who let him know by their remarks and treatment that they consider him a fool or impudent pretender and worry him. Can a mathematician calculate, or a poet compose, amidst persons worrying and disgusting him ? These things should be shewn only to a few at a time, and in a private room ; and the least signs of such discreditable and inexcusable conduct, as that to which poor Alexis was often exposed, should be firmly suppressed by the sensible and right-minded of the party. At the house of Mr. Robinson, and at the British Institute, and some other places, I am informed that a medical man treated him very improperly : but other persons, and even ladies, behaved as shamefully sometimes. A large number of persons, on the occasion of mesmeric experiments, consider it a privileged time for the exhibition of their own ignorance, folly, and unfairness. If Alexis on his return is to be exhibited in public, as some English individuals were exhibited in London last summer, I trust that the friends of mesmerism will stand aloof from him and M. Marcillet.

The wonder is that Alexis did not fail far more frequently than he did : and not that he latterly began to fail very much. He became more and more exhausted, and more and more felt the unfairness which accumulated towards him.

The first I heard of Alexis was Colonel Gurwood's interviews with him at Paris. The Colonel at his own house one day read to me his notes of various interviews with Alexis, written the same evening or the next morning after each interview. If the Colonel was astounded and satisfied so was I : because he is known to all the world as a man of perfect probity, a plain and straightforward soldier and gentleman, without any freaks of fancy or hastiness of opinion. He had never

accompanied his family to my house to witness my mesmeric experiments, and he doubted the truth of mesmerism altogether, when he at length gave way to the entreaties of a friend in Paris to visit Alexis. I do not hesitate to mention briefly some particulars of the many he read to me, because the reports are in the mouth of all the fashionable world, and I heard nothing from him that I have not since heard from others in general society. Alexis was led by him to his house in Lowndes Square; and the character of the roads and houses on landing in England, the statue at Charing Cross, the Queen's palace, and the situation and number of the Colonel's house, then the interior, the stairs, landing-place, drawing rooms, and the persons actually in it at the time, as was proved afterwards by a letter received from Mrs. Gurwood, he described admirably. He described the Colonel's own room, the number of engravings hanging on the wall, maintaining there were seven, whereas the Colonel declared they were but six and found himself wrong on returning to England: the subject of the engraving over the fire-place: a box in the room, and a very handsomely-bound volume in it, wrapped up, with French words upon the cover—(a volume of the *Duke's Despatches*, bound in green morocco and gilt, with the garter and French motto on the cover): the book closets on each side of the fire-place, and the very confused state of the books in one: an inner room, with a closet at the further end, and two swords hanging in it, one from a very distant country, the point of one rusty: an eastern inscription upon one (a Damascus blade with Persian or Arabic characters): the relation of the Colonel's apartment in the Tower to other rooms: a Hebrew inscription on one of the walls of one of the rooms: the relations between the Duke and the Colonel, and many particulars respecting them and others, which could not be generally known, and which he of course did not read to me, were exact. He was taken to periods of the Colonel's life in the Peninsula: and saw him save a Frenchman's life after battle; saw him disinterring the corpse of a friend; and enabled him to trace out persons afterwards, who supplied him with testimony which he had long been in want of. The Colonel had prevented the murder of a French officer after battle: and, on a subsequent visit to Spain, disinterred the body of a dear friend who had been thrown into the earth with others, and given him honourable burial. I cannot remember half or a quarter: nor do I pretend to perfect accuracy. He told the Colonel that the latter was going to dine in such a street and would go to the opera in the evening. The Colonel was going to dine in that street with Lord Cow-

ley; but had no idea of going to the opera: however in the evening Lord Cowley proposed their going, and they went.

The Colonel promised to furnish me with the whole account for *The Zoist*, except what related to private matters, but he afterwards declined, writing to me that "the publicity already given to these communications had given him much trouble and subjected him to much misrepresentation, and that an authorized publication would add to both." I thought of Lady Macbeth's words—"A soldier, and afeard!" I find an excuse for some medical men who have families dependent for bread upon their professional success, and conceal their belief in mesmerism: but when mere bantering and jeering can be the utmost mischief, I think every person is bound to come forward and declare the truth, for the good of science, the good of the afflicted, and the support of those whom the world persecute. Misrepresentation would be at an end if the precise truth were published.

A gentleman, who was a member of the last House of Commons, and was at the University of Cambridge at the same time with myself, and had been converted in my house to the belief in mesmerism by the case of Rosina and Miss Critchly (described in Nos. V. and VI. of *The Zoist*) called upon me, and, after hearing what Colonel Gurwood had related to me, related in his turn the following particulars of some interviews he had just had in Paris with Alexis:—

"Every one knows, I presume, that the *Memnon* steamer bringing mails from India was wrecked off Cape Guardafui, on the African coast of the Red Sea. If the reader does not know, perhaps the shareholders in the great Royal Steam Packet Company *will have the pleasure* to inform him. Was there ever any sentence comprising so many magical romantic ideas as are conveyed by *Memnon* (an enchanted musical statue), India, Africa, lands of magic, and the Red Sea, where, I believe, uneasy demons are or used to be laid. Mrs. B. had been in India, at Madras, some years with her husband, who holds an official situation there; but her own health, and that of her children, induced her, two or three years since, to return to Europe, and she resided at Paris with her father-in-law. She received a letter there from Mr. B., saying that he should *take the steamer* to Suez, pass from Alexandria by Gibraltar by sea, to Southampton, where he fixed to meet her in September. She had no reason to doubt, and prepared to join him as appointed. Previous to leaving Paris she determined to see a certain lad, by name ALEXIS DIDIER, who was reported to her to be a wonderful person, a real demon for knowing "what should ne'er be

known," and she went with a friend, and found him entranced, surrounded with twenty persons, all asking questions. His eyes were bandaged, and yet he answered them, read, played at cards, and did many feats. She approached him, holding out her hand which had a glove on. "Alexis," she said, "what is under my glove?" "There is a ring on the third finger." "Describe the ring, and its materials and shape." Alexis did so, rapidly and accurately. "What is written on it inside?" He told her precisely. "Now I wish," said she, "you would travel with me in idea." "Whither?" "To India, to the part I landed at. What sort of a ship did I go in?" He described it, her getting into the boat; he made out the letters *h o m a s* perfectly; but not much more, out of the "*Thomas Coutts*;" the view of the place, and the catamarans the natives use, although he could not give them a name. (They are three logs of wood fastened together, on which they brave the highest waves.) "Describe my husband." He did so. "Where is he now?" After some pause he said, "I see him; he is on board a ship; the ship is under full sail." Stop," said Mrs. B., "you are mistaken; Alexis, look again." "I do," said Alexis, "I repeat it." "Oh, surely," exclaimed Mrs. B., who had Mr. B.'s letter stating his return in a steamer, "you have perhaps mistaken the chimney for a mast." Alexis replied, "There is a mast, but there is no chimney. It is a sailing vessel." Mrs. B. left Alexis, certain he was wrong. Her anxiety was great when the *Memnon* was lost. *Within the last month she has received a letter from Mr. B., stating that he had altered his mind, and was coming home in a sailing vessel, by the Cape of Good Hope; and is at this moment in England, arrived in a sailing vessel. Alexis persisted that the vessel had only two masts. Truth compels me to say it had three.*

"Mrs. B. wrote this to her sister, and recited it herself to me in London on the 3rd of this month (November). I went to Paris next day, and before a week had passed, got a card of the mesmeriser, Mons. Marcillet, who has a large Office de Roulage (Waggons), but lives at No. 21, Rue Neuve Coquenard. Thither I repaired about two o'clock, p.m., was admitted, and ushered into a small drawing-room, in which might be assembled some twenty or thirty ladies and gentlemen, and several of the labouring class. They were crowding round a small round card-table. I could not for some time see the chief actor. At length I made my way round, and managed to get so near as to touch the table. Here I found a lad of about seventeen or eighteen, with his eyes

very thickly bandaged, sitting and talking shortly and nervously, rather low sometimes. He seemed oppressed from the heat of the room, and every one talking to him at once. At length a sort of order was restored, and a window opened. I saw a lady present him a letter, very closely written, in an envelope. He took it. "I want to know," said she, "what are the *four* words at the top of the *third* page?" He twisted the letter between his thumbs, applied it *to his stomach*, put it down on the table, and in a minute said, "*Decidedly!* The four first words at the top of the third page are ——— ———." The lady opened the letter, unfolded it, and read the VERY FOUR WORDS he had mentioned! Another lady then said, "Alexis, will you travel with me?" "Yes; give me your hand." She did. He then just passed his own over it, slightly clasping it, but let it go immediately. "Well, I am ready; which way do you go?" "Towards Fontainebleau, (forty miles from Paris); are you there?" "Yes." "Pray describe my house near there." Alexis then rapidly described the approach, the appearance, the number of stories, and the windows, very minutely, and, as the lady allowed, very correctly. She then proposed to him to go indoors, to tell her the plan of the house, &c., and then her room, and the windows, &c., and furniture, and how arranged. This he did as perfectly! She then said, "You have told us, Alexis, that there is a secretaire, and which wall of the room it is placed against; is there anything upon it?" After a pause, "Yes there is; I see something." "What is it?" "I can't tell;" and after a moment, "It is something which is not natural." The lady nodded assent. "But what is it?" "Oh! I don't know; I can't say; I give it up; I can't tell you," said he, in an irritated tone. "Courage, courage, Alexis!" cried Mons. Marcillet, the mesmeriser, who came near him, and threw his hands and fingers at him as if sprinkling water, "Madame is anxious to know; you must try and tell her." A pause. "But I can't tell Madame." "Well then," cried the mesmeriser, "touch it, as you see it; feel it." On this he passed his fingers very very rapidly on the green cloth half a dozen times. "Oh!" said he, "I feel it; it is full of small holes." "True," said the lady. "Courage, Alexis!" We were all in wonder. "It lies," said Alexis, "in a slanting position, thus," describing with his hand an angle. Presently, "Oh! it is horrible to look at," with a shrinking action. The lady assented. "Oh!" said Alexis, "there is a large hole in it. I can put my fingers in, and I feel, I feel—oh! it is teeth I feel." The lady nodded assent, expressing wonder, and im-

mediately Alexis shewed great terror, and trembling, cried, "*Oh, mon Dieu ! c'est la tête d'un mort.*"—"It is the head of a dead man !" "Alexis is *quite* right," said the lady ; "it is so, and lying just as he describes it." The confusion was so great at this moment that I could not make out, among the chattering, whether it was a skull, or the head of a mummy, or New Zealander, but it was as he said, *la tête d'un mort*, and a curiosity. A gentleman *close* to me, handed from a lady across the table a card-case of green velvet, very richly filagreed with gold. "This lady," said he to Alexis, "wants to know what is inside this case." "Oh !" said Alexis, handling it ; "that is difficult ; there is so much gold about it, I can't do it." "Pray try." Well, after a minute, and putting it to his stomach, and smelling at it : "In this card-case there are three visiting cards. On one are such letters," giving letter by letter very slowly, and apparently stumbling, as if they were in a mist ; but at length he mentioned the letters composing the names and address on each card. Alexis then gave the case back. He appeared fatigued with this exertion.

"I addressed myself to his mesmeriser, Mons. Marcillet, to know what I had to pay. He replied, nothing. I then asked if he came to private parties, and the price. He replied, "Yes, with pleasure, on payment of thirty francs," about 24s.

"Such was my first interview with a *clairvoyant*. I was petrified with astonishment. Two or three days after I called on M. Marcillet, who was then shaving, but nevertheless kindly asked me to come in, and gave me a variety of papers to read. He showed me several of Colonel Gurwood's letters, who can better than any one, perhaps, attest the wonder of Alexis' power, with regard to himself and Colonel Husson, of the French artillery, &c. They were thrown about at random, but I entreated Mons. Marcillet to preserve them carefully. He told me many curious anecdotes of Alexis. That he (M. M.) himself had no idea how he had the power to mesmerise, and never felt the worse for doing it. He told me that he mesmerised Alexis's brother, who was also a good *clairvoyant*, but that his stupid country *bonne* (or housekeeper) was the most wonderful of all, and *predicted*, with awful accuracy, when in a mesmerised trance. I saw neither of these, as the younger Didier went to Orleans and Bordeaux next day.

"Next day came to my hotel Mons. Marcillet and Alexis, in the morning, and stayed two or three hours. Alexis looked at the prints in *Punch* of the Queen's trip to Cambridge with pleasure. He seemed modest, unassuming, like

any other lad of that age. He did not seem to relish being interrupted by Marcillet's summons to sit down, and resolutely persisted in taking his time, and finishing the prints in *Punch*. I mention this as it contrasts so completely with his spaniel-like affection to his mesmeriser, when entranced, when he did nothing but write over a sheet of paper, now by me,—“Marcillet, Marcillet, Marcillet.” He seemed heart and soul occupied by him. When unmesmerised, Marcillet laments that he is obstinate, and will not follow good advice. At length Alexis sat himself down in a chair, looking steadfastly in the mesmeriser's eyes, who sat opposite, and after a time passed his hands as usual. In three minutes he dropped off. His face seemed to be drawn together convulsively. He yawned, and occasionally shivered. *We now bandaged his eyes three times over.* We were three gentlemen and four ladies. *We sent to buy a pack of cards.* He is always most eagerly impetuous to play at *écarté*. He told every card, *before turned*, in his own, and all those of his adversary. He was delighted, but excessively impatient. He was very rarely wrong in naming the cards. After several games he played with his back to the table, bandaged, but as easily as if he were wide awake. After twenty minutes' play, a lady asked him where a certain book was, which she had purposely concealed before he arrived. “It is under that sofa cushion;” it is on such and such a subject. He was right, and he was as merry as possible. You could not go fast enough for him. He could see everything, and seemed to answer before you could get the question uttered.

“I had a few days before bought at a bookseller's the suspension-bridge of Roche Bernard, in Bretagne, (for they have many of them as wide as Clifton erected in every direction on the continent, *of wire*, without three Acts of Parliament, and for less than 70,000*l.*, which *do stand*, and answer *perfectly well*), with its description, and the description of the Friburg one,—in all three books, for which I had paid the bill. They were sent packed up in a large paper, tied with string, and knowing their contents (as I thought) I did not undo it, but placed it on the top of a bureau. I took the parcel down, exactly as it was, and laying it before Alexis,—“What is in this?” “Books.” “On what subject?” “Oh, there are subjects with scales and measurements; it is something—*quelque chose aerienne*.” Thinking he alluded to the aerial machine, I said, “No,” but he was positive, and though I did not yield, I must admit that a suspension-bridge is aerial, and that he was therefore right. He was evidently annoyed, but his politeness seemed to restrain further comment. “How

many books are there in this parcel?" "Four." "No, Alexis, there are assuredly but three." "But *there are four*." "I think," replied I, "I ought to know, as I ordered them, and paid for them. Here is the bill, and there are but three." He then, in a nervous agitation, pounced upon the parcel, trying to tear the books out, crying "There are four," to prove what he said. I said "Patience," and untied it, and, *lo! there were four!* The bookseller had, unknown to me, enclosed "a catalogue of works sold by him!" This triumph put him in high force. "Now, Alexis, let us travel. Whither? To England. First, we will go to London." "Well where then?" "Towards the West by railway." Ah! there we are. "It is a city," said I, "about forty leagues west of London. There is a river near it, and something I want you to describe near the city." "It is," he said, "three leagues (about nine miles) from the mouth of the river." "Yes, here it is," said I, putting the print of the Clifton Suspension Bridge, as represented in cruel mockery *finished*. My hand covered the word Clifton. "What is the name of the place?" "It is CLIFTON—Clivdon." Placing his finger on the *middle part* of the bridge, he said, "There is *nothing here, here; the two sides are there*." "Yes; but look again, Alexis. Are you sure there is nothing there?" "Oh! yes; there are two ropes—I see them now quite distinctly: and I see, I see a basket. Oh! there it goes," and he made the motion and the noise of the basket rushing down, and then imitated the slow motion of winding it up on the other side most admirably. Well, Alexis, you must really come and see it when awake. "I will tell you, then," said he, "how far you live from it. Aye," said he, perceiving the doubt in my mind, "I will tell you, and tell you *precisely*." "How far then?" "Why nine kilometres." That is English measure in a straight line five-and-a-half miles as near as possible. He told me my house was on a hill, the staircase opposite the door, the billiard table and the piece of wood on one end of it. But he got very confused after, although he told what I believed the number of horses in the stable.

"Let us travel again, Alexis." "Where? To England?" "No." "To Scotland?" "Oh, but that is England." "I beg your pardon, Alexis, it is not." "Oh, but all beyond the sea is England to me." "Well I have a friend there in the North, near ——" "Oh! I know." "Well, if you do, tell me about him." "He is in a country house." "I believe so. What age?" *Instantly* "Twenty-eight—he is tolerably tall—he is very pale—he has dark brown hair." He then described the face and colour of the eye perfectly. "He can

sing—has not a bass, but a baritone voice—he has *mal de poitrine*, illness of the chest—he coughs.” “What is he doing?” “He is reading a newspaper.” “What paper?” “*The Edinburgh Journal*.” “Is it this size?” said I taking a large *Morning Chronicle*, and giving it to him. He burst out laughing, saying, “Oh, what immense newspapers your English ones are.” No, it is this sort of size, folding the *Chronicle* neatly up on both sides lengthways and breadthways to shew the size. A person present observed Alexis was right as to the size of *The Edinburgh Journal*. He said lightly, “This is your *second* English Journal, the *Morning Chronicle*.”

“Look again, Alexis, at my friend’s face; do you observe anything?” Pausing a little, “No, I do not:” then instantly, “Yes, I do; over his eye is a scar, thus—and, stop—oh, yes, I see he has lost the sight of it.” “Which eye, Alexis?” “The right eye.” My friend had had it blown by gunpowder when a boy, and it is very difficult to find out that he has lost it. “What is good for his complaint?” “I know, and could tell you.” “Are you not interested in him very deeply?” “Yes, I know it,” said he, “I could tell you now, but might make a mistake. Write to him for a lock of his hair; let me have that, and I shall be able to tell you to a certainty!” “Where is it to be cut from?” “Oh, anywhere; but if you please, to take it from the back of the head.” The kindness of heart he displayed was quite affecting; and in another case also of health he entered into it with intense feeling. He certainly is a very benevolent Demon! At our request, he eagerly complied with our wishes that he should write down what he had so astonishingly told us about our friend in the North; he seized a pen and wrote down vigorously (as follows) and rapidly. Here it lies by me now and I copy it:—

“‘28 ans., brune, pâle, grand, assez mal à la poitrine, Œil Droit, il tousse a une très belle voix barritone.’

“A lady had a particular question to ask, which she had determined upon when first she heard of Alexis, and had never imparted to any one. He was withdrawn a little from the table; he was in high spirits, chuckling away as she wrote on a bit of paper concealed from him these words—“He always manages best with women interrogators. Let me ask him?” “Oh! that I do,” he said, and they sat apart. What the question was we know not, but the lady asserted that as she was preparing to put it, before she had uttered two words, as if seeing into her mind, he told her exactly what she was going to ask, and answered it in a moment. He now jumps up, and going to the piano-forte, stand and plays a tune

upon it, rather in a thumping stuccato style, and no very good music, but it was a tune both bass and treble. One can hardly believe he is asleep, but he is completely so. Well he sits down again. "I feel tired," he said. "Will you have anything?" "Yes, a glass of wine?" "Yes. "Well here's a glass of sherry." "Well, pour it out." He drinks it, and a second. "Will you eat?" "If you please." "There is hardly anything but the remains of what is in this round deal case." "What is in it, Alexis?" *Pâté de foie gras*, (a liver pie.) True. It was put before him. "See," said he, gravely thrusting the fork among the truffles, "how well a man asleep can find them out." He helped himself largely and ate with a good appetite. I turned to a lady who sat near, and inquired of her whether she would eat anything? I could not finish this short question, before, like lightning, he addressed her, saying, "You breakfasted at twenty-five minutes past ten o'clock, and I see you do not want anything! You are not hungry, I am sure." The lady acknowledged he was quite right, but we enjoyed a hearty laugh at his penetration. I may add that the lady had breakfasted in a house several streets off. He seemed to see my mind, and the lady's appetite at the same glance. "Well now, Alexis, as you have done justice to this pie, pray let us know where it came from." We supposed he might have said Strasburg, so famous for them, or at least Paris, where we were sitting. Who would have guessed going out of Paris, to purchase such a delicacy in a country place? to bring it into Paris? But Alexis instantly answered, "You bought it at St. Germain two days ago! at such a shop, in such a place!" "But you do not describe it sufficiently, Alexis." "Oh, I see, it is near the prison." He was quite right. While he was talking to us, the footman came in and said, "There is a person, Sir, in the next room waiting for you?" Who is it?" I said, or rather would have said, for Alexis instantly imitated the action of a woman who sews, a little exaggerated, and said, "*qui coude*" without other interruption of his sentence, or tone. "Open the door," said I, "of the bedroom," and lo! there stood the sempstress. In the course of the visit he would take a dozen letters, and reject all but that you desired to find, but without seeing the name of the writer, and in the most rapid and decided manner. Now and then he made a mistake in other points. The mesmeriser treated him as a pointer, with "Have a care there! So! so!" Courage! applauding him warmly when he did well. He told a lady all about her brother in India, what he was doing in many respects, but when he touched upon his native female ac-

quaintances he shewed the greatest tact and delicacy in dealing with them.

"Well, at length, after nearly three hours' trance, he was unmesmerised, and awoke with very little difficulty. All his liveliness and freedom and laughter was gone. He was very civil and rather shy, bowing, amazed at our questions. "Well, how do you feel Alexis?" "Hungry?" "Rather." "And yet you made a good inroad in the *Pâté de foie gras* just now." "What *pdté*?" "When?" with the most *naïvé* simplicity. "Why, Alexis, don't you see it and the plates, and knives and forks." "Mons. Marcillet," said he, in a plaintive tone, "have I been eating?" "To be sure you have," and we could not help laughing. Poor youth! whatever his sleeping moments may be to them, his waking ones cannot be the most agreeable to himself. For all his knowledge he gets sadly laughed at.

"I had them a second time in private. He did some wonderful things, but as we did not begin with cards and get well into train, he made many mistakes. He told me he saw from his stomach and from his great toe, and certainly every thing he was in doubt about he applied to his stomach, as he did to his eyes when awake! Mons. Marcillet told me he shot well putting his gun to his stomach, while mesmerised and his eyes bandaged, and in that manner played very well at billiards.

"I saw him at a public *séance* again with Mr. P., on his way to Italy. Mr. P. was a member for the borough, where M. Marcillet's son was staying with a private tutor for three months in England, and Mr. P. was most anxious to see Alexis. On the way there he told me that he had heard of him in England, from a gentleman resident near T—n, whose son had written to him from Paris, stating that Alexis had given him a complete description of his country-house, and particularly of the library. That there were two prints, one of Napoleon, the other of the Queen, hung up, and between them an oil painting of a lady, with a fan, which was correct.

"At the very opening of this public sitting, however, an English medical man avowed openly his strong disbelief of Alexis' powers, and seemed embittered with a hostile spirit. If he could do this, why not that? If he could see through paper, why not through metals? Why make any mistake, &c., &c. Mons. Marcillet immediately predicted that Alexis, with such a person at hand, would not succeed. Such his invariable experience shewed, although he allowed he could not account for it. Alexis was mesmerised. He was still wonderful in his play, but still he was very often wrong, and

he seemed chilled and disgusted. He described tolerably well to a gentleman his family circle at dinner, but saw nothing remarkable about one daughter who was said to have a tumor on her neck, and wore a large white bandage over it. Our sceptic chuckled, and Alexis bungled and was mortified. I felt for Alexis, having seen him so splendid and joyous, and knowing what he could do: but there was our sceptic like an iceberg, "chilling the genial current of the soul." At last he gives him, after a little skirmish between himself and Marcillet, a packet, sealed. "What is inside, Alexis?" "Writing." "Is it a name or a word?" asks Alexis. Sceptic—"If you can read it, Alexis, what is that to either of us? tell *me* what it is." Alexis turning it in vain, at last tears the seal. "That is not fair," quoth sceptic: and in that we agreed with him. However, it was rescued in time: Marcillet mesmerises with all his might. At last Alexis says, "It is not French or English: it is Latin." "No," says sceptic, "it is not Latin." "I cannot do it," says Alexis, "I give it up. What is it, Sir?" "The word is written by myself: it is French; it is *cadavre*, a corpse." Alexis certainly failed; and yet *cadaver*, a corpse, the Latin, is with the transposition of one vowel only, and the identical pronunciation certainly not very distant from the French *cadavre*. Alexis, however repulsed, was not subdued. Marcillet fluidised him

"With might and main,
Till the toil drops fell from his brows like rain."

Seven of us encircled the devoted youth. "Tell us," we cried, "the exact time *each of our* watches *now in our pockets* is." He did: one after another, as he spoke the time, took out his watch, and as he spake so it was, to the *minute*, and sometimes to the second! Before I took out mine, I said, "What is there about my watch?" "The glass is broken," he said, "and you have lost the little hand that goes tic tac, tic tac, in a little circle." I knew it was so. I drew it out, and the time was right to a minute: the glass was broken, and the second-hand gone. There was a universal applause, but sceptic had crossed the room, and was standing in the further window, "chewing the cud of his bitter fancy," and his "*cadavre au suprême*." I could not help thinking, by Alexis's manner, that the sceptic's proximity to him felt, like the magic book of Michael Scott to William of Deloraine, "a load upon his breast;" and when sceptic moved a few yards, Alexis, like the moss-trooper, "breathed free in the morning wind, and strove his hardihood to find." "And pray, Alexis, now," said a gentleman, "what time is my

watch." "You, Sir, stopped your watch exactly twenty minutes after twelve, and on purpose, too." You are quite right there, Alexis; and so saying, he drew it out and shewed it to us,—twenty minutes after twelve, and *no go*. I left Alexis in glee, as it was growing dusk.

"I observed to Monsieur Marcillet that Alexis had done wonders, but that the last two sittings were very inferior to the first, and that Alexis was very unequal. He agreed to it. I conjured him to keep his subject under good government when awake, as his health, perhaps, suffered from his gaieties in Paris. I inquired how Alexis was first found, and learnt that he was attending a chance meeting, when the mesmeriser requested any one present to mount the platform. Alexis did so, and being mesmerised turned out so *clairvoyant* as to induce Monsieur Marcillet to take him in hand. He observed Alexis had always been a walker in his sleep before he was mesmerised.

"M. Marcillet alluded to a similar failure after similar triumph at Rouen. The account of it had struck me also very forcibly; on going away I crossed the sceptic, and we had some conversation. I wished to refer to the Rouen failure of Brache, but he exclaimed, "Sir," in a way *un peu brusque*, considering we were unknown to each other, "what care I for the statement in the Rouen Journal? I have been here five times: I believe nothing. Monsieur Lecomte, at the theatre, does every night as extraordinary things, conveying pieces of money into people's pockets. Why should my presence affect him? What has my belief or disbelief to do with the matter?" I replied, Sir, you preclude my troubling you with the proceedings at Rouen, as you refuse to hear it; although it might assist your argument as shewing *another failure of Alexis*. But why it is or is not so, who can tell? but so it is, and it would be just as easy to tell why he can tell me what time my watch is when you are away, as that he cannot when you are near. I have seen him four times, and *do believe* he possesses wonderful *clairvoyance*, in spite of mistakes, and very *unequal* powers.

"I have now mentioned some of Alexis's doings; his name is most renowned in Paris, and spreading over the whole world. I have to thank him for clearing up to me many a puzzled, obscure suspicion, many an historic doubt. In 1843, Alexis can eat his *pâté de foie gras*, drink his *sherry*, play at *écarté* or billiards, and knock down his pheasants, nay, even play and waltz awake or asleep with his eyes bandaged; and Moïse. Mareillet roll his heavy waggons along the French roads, and mesmerise in the interval, without being

poisoned, impaled, crucified, or burnt. I hope ere long to go shooting with this demon; but poor Socrates could not do so with his, without a potage of hemlock; nor Apollonius Tyanaeus see Domitian killed by Stephanus from Ephesus to Rome, without suddenly disappearing himself, and being called an impudent fellow, because he said *he could tell languages and the very thoughts of persons*; nor poor Joan of Arc, that simple, that patriotic, that atrociously used girl, with her "voices" point out her king at once, notwithstanding his denial, at Chinon Castle Hall, and strike terror into her and her country's enemies, and crown him at Rheims, and be *clairvoyante*, without being burnt as a witch in A.D. 1431. Let us be thankful that we live in times when we can speak freely, and when the progress of science enables us to remove the veil of what have been hitherto deemed superhuman mysteries.

"Mons. M. confirmed the following history to me, which having heard from another quarter, I questioned him about:—A medical man, in the neighbourhood of Paris, was sent for *some years* ago by a patient who required immediate attention. By mistake he went into the court-yard of another house, where a very large dog fell upon him, and bit him severely near the hip. He escaped, and found the house of the patient he was sent for to. As he returned home, he foresaw the grief and alarm his wife and family would experience if he told them that he had been bitten by a dog, and he determined never to communicate the fact to any one. In time he got well; the scar still remained, but he was not the worse for it. Years past away, when a few months since a neighbour of his a military man, called upon him, and proposed to take a run up to Paris, to see Alexis Didier. 'I think,' said the soldier, 'he will be puzzled to find out where I have been wounded.' It was agreed to. They arrive, and find Alexis sitting in due, blind bandaged state. 'I have a question to put to you, Alexis.' 'Give me your hand, Sir.'" He felt it a moment. "I am a military man?" "I know that." "Have I been ever wounded?" "You have," "How often?" "Three times." "Where?" "There, there, and there" touching the three wounds. "Were they made by ball or by sword?" "This was by sword, those two by musket balls," fixing his fingers on them! "Pardieu, Mons. Alexis," cried the astonished soldier; "you are quite right. It is as you say!"

"On this our medical man thought he might puzzle him. Have I ever been wounded, Alexis? A long pause. "Yes, you have." "Where?" Upon this Alexis touches his own

BODY rapidly all over, and pointing on the hip, exclaims, "Here, exactly here." "By ball or by sword?" "By neither." "By bayonet?" "No, but it is not unlike; it is thus, >," describing its shape with his thumb nail. "If not by ball, sword, or bayonet, how was it done?" A long, very long pause. At length a sudden light appears to stream in upon him. He begins in a low tone, as if muttering to himself. "Oh, I see; yes, you get off your horse; you open the yard gate; the house is so and so; you cross the yard; you go to ring at the bell—(he becomes quite excited)—Oh! there it is. It comes jumping and barking towards you; it is such a colour; it jumps on you; it seizes you; it bites you here," pointing to the hip! imitating the dog and all its movements; "it is, it is, (he is so agitated with the vivid scene that he cannot get at the word, or he sees obscurely, at last he gets out) it is a great dog!"

And must I pass over Colonel G.'s sword, described as hanging in his room in England, covered with rust, and the inscription on it, *totidem verbis*;—his describing the room in the Tower of London;—his describing him entering the Thames in a calm, at a certain hour, and all the *minutiae* of his whole journey;—his opening and writing his letters; the hotel, and its room he went into: which was confirmed by the Colonel; the observation made by Col. G. at the moment being that, the sea was as smooth as oil, &c. &c.

P.S. Nov. 27.—I have this moment received a letter from Paris, dated Nov. 24.—"As Alexis is evidently no prophet *as to time*, I doubt his being so in anything relating to the future. I received an account of a private *séance*, yesterday, at Mons. Charles Ledru (a great friend of Lord Brougham's), a celebrated French lawyer. An English lady travelled Alexis to her house in idea. He said I see a locket lying on your table; it contains the hair of three persons—one is of Napoleon, the other of Wellington, and then added, the other person's name I do not know. He was even greater than Wellington, but not so highly in rank (situated.) The lady confessed it was the hair of Nelson.

"There were two priests present, one a Cardinal from Rome, and to him Alexis described his own apartments at Rome, and then the various beauties of the Vatican."

After this Alexis made his appearance in London at my house, and an account of the sitting was printed in No. VI. of *The Zoist*. He next appeared at Lord Adare's, and in the same number is an account of that sitting. He came a second time to my house, and the following is the account, drawn up for a newspaper:—

Sir,—Since the account of the phenomena of clairvoyance, exhibited by Mr. Alexis, appeared in your columns of last week, another private party have witnessed a similar exhibition at the house of Dr. Elliotson, at which I had the honour of being present; and the following plain statement of what I then saw will, I think, be interesting to your readers. I must premise, that I had never before seen any experiments whatever in animal magnetism, &c.; that I was totally unacquainted with Dr. Elliotson, Mr. Marcillet, and Mr. Alexis; and that I went, note-book in hand, prepared to watch and observe as accurately as possible, and that this account is drawn up from the notes I then made. Alexis having seated himself in a large easy chair, Mr. Marcillet stood in front of him, and after fixing his eyes upon him for about four minutes, the magnetic sleep was produced. During this operation there were convulsive motions of the limbs and muscles of the face, and every now and then Alexis turned his eyes towards the operator, as it seemed to me, with an expression of pain, and almost entreaty to desist. The convulsive motions subsided after a few passes by the operator, and then the phenomena of catalepsy were shewn. His hands were extended, and became quite rigid, and were again relaxed by Mr. Marcillet passing his hand once or twice over them. His legs were then stretched out, and, to test their rigidity, a gentleman, weighing at least 14 stone, stood upright upon them, Alexis' body being kept balanced by two gentlemen pressing on his shoulders. Alexis is by no means strong in appearance; but I apprehend the strongest man would find the above feat difficult. It was then proposed to bandage his eyes. A quantity of cotton wool was placed over them, and kept down by three handkerchiefs, one encircling the head, the other two placed diagonally. The gentleman—a visitor, like myself—who undertook the tying, did not seem to do it to Alexis' satisfaction, for he said, "*Serrez fort, serrez fort*" (tie it tight), and, still being dissatisfied, he seized the ends of the handkerchief, and tied them himself. The visitors were then asked to examine the handkerchiefs, and each person who did so was satisfied that vision was impossible. A pack of cards was then brought, which, it should be remarked, had glazed and ornamented backs, so that it would have been more than ordinarily difficult to see through them, even with a strong light behind. A visitor came forward to play, and Alexis seated himself at the table which was in the middle of the room, so that there was a cross light. He seized the cards, a full pack, in a quick, hurried manner, and sorted them for *écarté*. He did this with great rapidity, and made but one mistake. Several games were played, during

which he frequently told his adversary what cards he had in his hand, as on one occasion that he had three tens, on another that he had four trumps; and again he called for the cards seriatim which his adversary was to play. Once or twice he made mistakes, as saying the nine of hearts instead of the seven, but in the great majority of instances was right. Another person then took the cards, and the same wonders were repeated. He then moved away from the table, and played at a distance of about four yards from his adversary, but he still told the cards as before, and played his own frequently without looking at their faces. During the whole of this time Mr. Marcillet stood at some little distance, and from time to time repeated the passes. Dr. Elliotson took no part in the proceedings. Alexis was then asked to read, and a volume of *Le Moyen, Aye Pittoresque*, was placed before him. The wool and bandages were still unmoved, but he read off from the page wherever he was told by any of the visitors, and by myself amongst the rest. On one occasion he continued to do so, although two hands were placed before his face and the type. He seemed, however, to find this somewhat more difficult. He was very animated, and talked rapidly as he turned over the pages, as if pleased with his own exploits. Whilst doing this, and just as he had said, in answer to a question, that the picture was a cathedral, I interrupted him hastily with, "*Mais quelle cathedrale?*" He replied, "*C'est une bonne question*," and, placing his hand upon the letter-press, instantly said, "*Notre Dame de Chalon*," which was quite correct. He also accurately described some figures in armour. He then, of his own accord, offered to read a line five pages off; but in this he failed. A volume of Bossuet was then brought from Dr. Elliotson's library, no visitor having brought one. He took my hand and asked me to shew him what to read, and read several times correctly. In one instance he read the two following lines,—"*C'est encore pour eux un grand embarras de voir que (le) prophète fuisse aller le temps du Christ (Jesus)*." He however insisted that it was "*le*" and not "*ce*," and read "*Jesus Christ*" instead of "*Christ*" only. On this part of the experiments no great stress can be laid, as after the Bossuet was brought he complained of the great heat and threw off the handkerchiefs, so that his eyes were only closed as in sleep. He then said, separating about 150 pages of the volume, and holding them firmly together, that he would read some words on whichever side and whatever part of the page I pleased, but would not undertake to say how far off the words were. I then pointed out the side and part of the page that I wished, and he gave

the words "*Tite-Livè*" and "*Romulus*;" saying that each commenced a paragraph. This was not done immediately, but the leaves were not opened at all. I examined the book, and found about 80 pages on the words "*Tite-Livè*," and about 150 the word "*Romulus*," each in the place and position required by me, and each commencing a paragraph. He then seated himself in the large chair once more, and a stranger (I believe, Dr. Castle of Milan) sat down by him, and put himself *en rapport* with him. I did not hear the conversation, but Dr. Castle afterwards stated to those present, that Alexis had described to him accurately how he (Dr. Castle) had passed the preceding night, and the nature and seat of the pain that he had suffered from. But further and more satisfactory proofs of clairvoyance were given. Alexis read a word (content) that was enclosed in a card-board box, and presented to him for that purpose by a visitor. He made out the letters *o n* first, and the others after some difficulty. But in a case of this kind, every one naturally distrusts every experiment not made by himself. I therefore took out my pocket-book and wrote three words; but being asked to put one only, I wrote in another place "*ami*." I shewed this to no one, but turning a leaf over it, said I had written a word which I wished him to read. It was one of Penny's metallic pocket-books, so that any of your readers may test the practicability of seeing a light pencil-mark through. I kept the leaf pressed firmly over the word, and upon the body of the book, and held it in his hand. Directly he placed his hand in my other hand, he said, merrily, "*Que vous êtes bon ! Il n'y a que trois lettres*" (How kind you are—there are but three letters). I assented. He then wrote nearly, but not exactly, over it, the letter *a*, then turned to me, and said, "That is right." I assented. He then wrote *m*, and inquired in the same way. I said nothing. He repeated the question. I remained silent. He then said in a jocose half-bantering tone—(to this effect)—"You may just as well say so, because you know it is." I then said, "*Oui*." He repeated it after me in high glee, and added instantly the *i*, scratching a fine flourish underneath to shew that he had succeeded. I shewed the pocket-book to those present, and all were satisfied that they could not have read it. It is now in my possession, and I would shew it to any one who might wish to see it.

I make no comments on the above facts, I attempt no explanation; but it is right to add, that all present, and among them were several medical men, were perfectly satisfied of the fairness of the experiments. No one would suggest any pos-

sible plan of collusion. I can be surprised at no one being incredulous until he has seen the experiments with his own eyes. For even now, without again scrutinizing another series of experiments, I could not honestly say that I was altogether convinced. I only say, that if there be deception, the deception would be almost more wonderful than the reality. I send you my name and address, and remain,

Sir, your obedient servant,

AN INQUIRER AFTER TRUTH.

P.S. After having drawn up the above, I read the article in the *Chronicle* of this day (July 2). I certainly regret that the reporter did not remain when asked to do so by Dr. Elliotson, although I cannot but say that the impression of all who heard what passed was anything but favourable to the gentlemanly feeling and conduct of the reporter; and also that Dr. Elliotson could hardly have acted otherwise. I regret the absence of the reporter, because the one word written by me, and in almost exact accordance with the requisitions made in the article above mentioned, was read fairly and honestly by Mr. Alexis, without having been seen by any one else. I may further add, that the following gentlemen, having witnessed—some, indeed, having tested—the above experiments, voluntarily subscribed their names to a paper expressive of their conviction of the integrity of this extraordinary exhibition :—

The Viscount Adare, 76, Eaton-square.

John Elliotson, M.D., Conduit-street.

John Ashburner, M.D., 55, Wimpole-street.

H. Storer, M.D., Granville-street, Brunswick-square.

James George Davey, M.D., Hanwell Asylum.

W. C. Engledue, M.D., Portsmouth.

M. Castle, M.D., Milan.

Dr. Ritterbandt.

Edmond Sheppard Symes, 38, Hill-street, Berkeley-sq.

T. G. Margary.

Nathaniel Ogle.

Daniel Thomas Evans, Temple.

John James, Captain, Dover.

Henry U. Janson, President of the Exeter Literary and Philosophical Society.

W. Topham, Temple.

Henry G. Atkinson, G.S., 18, Upper Gloucester-place.

Edward Wise, Temple.

H. Baillière, 219, Regent-street.

John Hulme, Exeter.

— Thompson, H. S., Fairfield.

LORD ADARE has permitted me to publish the following particulars of a second visit to Eaton Square, from his lordship's note-book :—

Alexis' eyes were bandaged. Lord L. took up a card, and Alexis told it after thinking a few seconds. He then extracted one from the pack ; and after one mistake Alexis told it correctly.

Lord Adarc then gave him Villemain's *Cours de Literature* to read, (opening a page;) he held it nearly on a level with his eyes ; so that it was impossible for ordinary vision to act ; there being an inch thick of cotton and three handkerchiefs between his eyes and the object. He began by spelling the first word : and then read more easily, reading a line or two. He then turned to another page, and read quite rapidly, the book being about *twenty degrees* below the level of his eyes. Lord Adarc asked him to read through several pages ; and turned to another place and pointed to the right side, in which he had seen nothing : he told three words. The party looked over the pages, but could not find the words. The same happened again. We tried again : he said, "I see two lines—on one *Francais*, and below *Albigeois*." This was right, four leaves off, and near the inside of the page. We turned to another place, and he read, "*descendants les antiquités mysterieux*:" which was right. He was asked to read at four pages ; and this was four pages. Again, he said, "I see a curious word—'tis my own name:" and so it was, and four pages off. He had no opportunity of turning over a leaf of this book. Lord L. put a small box into his hand. He was puzzled ; but said it was something wrapped up in grey paper, and was a black thing like gum. He had no help or encouragement : he could make out no more. It was Indian rubber. Some one gave him a folded paper with a word. He made it out with only one or two mistakes. It was "*Horacie*." Lady P. was put in *rapport* with him, and asked him to go to a house in the country. He said he saw water near the house, (yes) : a *riviere*, (no) : a large pond, (yes) : to the left, (yes) : five steps to the house, (no). She then said, "Describe the room I am thinking of." "It has two windows, (yes) : books, (no) : a bed, (yes) ; two doors, (yes) : chimney to the left of the bed, (yes)."

In answer to one question, in which he made a mistake, he said, "but it may be differently arranged since you were there—it is some time since you were there." "Not long," she replied. "About three weeks" (yes). She then asked him to tell her who lived in the room. "A child" (yes) : "a boy" (yes) : "a relation and a near one" (yes). He was

then wrong about age; and he said that some how he had become confused. We were going to try something else, when, after two or three minutes, he said. "Ah, he is nine years old, (yes): son of the owner of the house, (yes)." She then asked him to describe another room. I only heard part of the description. "Three windows, (yes). Near the window a piano, (yes). A portrait opposite the chimney-piece, (yes). A full-length one, (no). Well, nearly so, (yes). Something on it—not a coat, (yes). To the right a picture of a lady, (yes). Not a portrait, (yes). In white, (the lady seemed doubtful). Pale, and curious looking, (yes). I have seen it often, have I not? (yes). The Virgin, (yes). With the child, (yes). The paper of the room is *rouge foncé*, (yes). The pond is to the right; but there is a wall between, which prevents you seeing it, (yes)."

Lord L. gave him a word folded up in paper. He seemed tired. I knew the word and gave him my hand, which helped him to make it out thus,—“Second letter *o*, (yes); end *ne*, (yes); *i* before *n*, (yes).” The *l* puzzled him a little: the *j* more. He made but few guesses, however, and got them all out right. The word was Joceline.

Miss — placed herself *en rapport*. “How many brothers have I?” “Three” (yes). Alexis had complained of fatigue before this began. “One older and two younger than you, (yes). The eldest handsome, (yes). In London, (no). Not in London, *c’est curieux*.” He then said he was tired: and being engaged to another *séance*, he was not pressed.

Dr. Costello it appears was present on this occasion, and he sent the following account to the *Medical Times*:—

Sir,—Presenting myself with Mr. Marcillet’s card, I was admitted to a private *séance* in a house in Eaton Square; I had never till this morning seen either M. M., or his subject, M. Alexis. My introduction, through his means, into an exalted private circle, (unfortunately I could not obtain any other,) had, I soon felt, produced an unfavourable impression. Alexis was on my arrival in a state of catalepsy—the inferior extremities, completely rigid, were stretched out and raised a foot or more from the ground. At the mesmeriser’s request, I got up and stood upon the shins of the sleeper without producing any change beyond that of forcing the limbs down a little by my weight (13 stone).

The *rigidity* was removed by a few passes, when a bandage was applied over his eyes, and a pack of cards was given him; he began as for the game of *écarté*, by culling out the lower cards rapidly until the pack was reduced. He made no mistake in this process; but in once throwing over a

seven, and, subsequently, an ace, both of which he recalled immediately. He played a few games, in which he exhibited very great mastery, I had almost said, a perfect knowledge of the cards in his hand. He did not always take the cards in his hand, but sometimes played them from the table on which they lay, backs upwards.

He announced his having the king, proposed for cards also without disturbing them from the position in which the dealer had put them out; once or twice he was asked what cards his adversary had? On one occasion he said the adversary held four red cards; but he failed to name them correctly; but he was right as to the number of red cards. Having mentioned in the house of a gentleman where I had been spending the previous evening, that it was probable I should have an opportunity of being present next day at one of M. Alexis' mesmeric sittings, my friend left the room, and soon returned with a sealed packet, which he delivered to me, in order that I should try if he could describe its contents, and authorized me to open it only after the description was given. He abstained from making me acquainted with its contents. I was thus prepared with an experiment of my own, which I proposed to the gentleman of the house. The proposition was at once refused, and I think properly so, as it was open to the suspicion of collusion. The lady of the mansion now placing herself near Alexis, and informing him that she had passed five or six years in the neighbourhood of Geneva, asked him to describe the house in which she had resided. This he did in the main correctly, stating that there was a garden with flowers, and another with vines, and that it was near water, not a lake, but a river falling into a lake—that she lived with two other persons, and also in another house for a shorter period. But in this description the gentleman affirmed, that there were some mistakes, and continuing to question him, the answers of Alexis did not seem to give him more satisfaction. Mr. Marcillet seemed a good deal chagrined at this, and declared that the gentleman's incredulity had a disturbing influence, which greatly impaired the powers of his subject.

Another gentleman now put himself *en rapport* with Alexis. He wished him to follow him in mind into Lincolnshire, and describe the house he lived in there. Alexis said, "I am with you: but this house is too large for me to describe. Let us fix on some of its rooms." He then described a library—a small room in which there was a bust—not marble, but plaster on a pedestal; and lastly, a very large room, lighted by a dome raised from the centre of the ceiling; he

said there were two fire-places with white marble chimney-pieces, and spoke in terms of admiration of the varied colours of the light admitted into this noble apartment. All these points were assented to as correct. He then followed the questioner, and described a terrace upon which the last room opened. The gentleman of the house then put some questions as to the terrace, and the objects adjacent, the answers to which he stated were incorrect. He next tried to declare the objects contained in a bracelet handed to him by the lady—his efforts were unsatisfactory.

The sitting was now drawing to a close, and having been denied the opportunity of satisfying myself in regard to my friend's sealed packet, I asked permission of M. Marcillet to put a question as to a fact in which I was engaged early on Monday morning. I said I was aware that coming there under the auspices of the mesmeriser, and, moreover, labouring under the disadvantage of not being known to himself, I could well understand that if the answer was satisfactory, it could be so only to myself; but if it were otherwise, I should state it to be so without hesitation. Permission having been courteously granted, I took Alexis by the hand, and asked him to describe the persons, the room, and the act in which I was engaged on Monday morning. He answered, after brief musing, "you are in a room with a person, not on a bed, but a couchette; this person has suffered a great deal; you have been doing something to his head—there is another person also—there are instruments with screws laid out on the table (*des objets mecaniques et á vis*).” While speaking, he kept moving his hands over the front of his person, till he reached the lower part of the abdomen, when he exclaimed suddenly, "*Tiens, vous l'operez aussi au bas ventre, vous operez pour la pierre.*" I was astonished at the minuteness and truthfulness of his description. I asked him if the patient was old or young? he answered, young. The truth was, that I was performing the operation of lithotripsy on a gentleman—not young, but 80 years of age,—at Clifton, on the morning of that day, and the room, sofa, and position of the table on which my instruments lay, were as correctly described as if he had been present. It is moreover not a little singular that the patient has an ulceration behind the ear, which his servant dresses for him. This closed the sitting. Of course the correctness of Alexis' answers to me had no influence on the mind of Mr. ——. It might, however, have puzzled him, as it has me, had I been known to him as I trust I am to the members of my own profession.

I remain, &c.,

Golden Square, July 24.

W. B. COSTELLO.

The *Medical Times* contains an account also of an interview ordered by Lord Adare at Mr. Baillière's, at which I was present.

Sir,—I take leave to submit to your readers an outline of some extraordinary mesmeric proceedings, which took place on Monday last at a *séance* in the drawing-room of Mr. Baillière, the medical publisher. The principal performer was the celebrated youth Alexis. The reunion was private, formed at the instance of a noble lord, and composed of some members of his family, with a few visitors, members of the three learned professions.

The magnetic sleep was induced in about five minutes. M. Marcillet operated. The process was simply a fixed gaze of much earnestness. A few convulsive movements of the youth's face were the only phenomena, preceding sleep, which excited my notice. After a moment's repose, he appeared to recover himself; and, though I thought I saw a changed expression of countenance, his appearance by no means indicated that he was not in a natural state: but his eyelids were closed. The task of bandaging his eyes was mine. I first fitted small layers of wadding exactly over the eyelids—successively overlayed these with larger—covered all over with two thick blankets of wadding:—finally, fastened three silk handkerchiefs in a way likely to make vision impossible. Alexis, far from "hesitating dislike," or suggesting objections, as I have seen others who have endeavoured to sustain similar pretensions, shewed an apparent anxiety for every precaution. The day was warm, and the room of not large proportions; but he assured me he did not care for the heat caused by the wadding, desired me to add more, and insisted on drawing the handkerchiefs tighter than I had deemed necessary; allowed me again to add wadding by the side of the nose, to close any possible channel of sight. He advanced in high spirits to a card-table to play *écarté*. This game requires the small cards to be picked out and thrown aside: Alexis accomplished this with all the rapidity, and almost all the accuracy, of a skilled player unbandaged. When he made a blunder, he usually at once corrected it; he never failed to do so when his attention was thither directed. At times he made the most extraordinary discoveries or *guesses*. Thus, with the backs of the cards turned towards him, he would single one almost in the centre of the pack, correctly naming and discarding it before the card's face could have come in contact with ocular vision, supposing him to have after all enjoyed it. He more than once distinctly named the cards in his opponent's hand, and seemed to play throughout with a tolerably correct sense of the cards he had dealt both sides.

He occasionally mistook—but speedily saw his error; and though bandaged, as I have said, he saw his opponent's cards *when played*, and his own *when in hand*, with exactly the same ease and unvarying accuracy as would be possible with his eyes entirely free. There was no straining of the face; no attempt to see from any point above, below, or beside the bandage. He is one of the most expeditious players I have seen. Whatever the secret of his astonishing readiness with the cards, I am quite sure it was no ordinary ocular vision.

The marvels did not end here: he desired the table to be removed to the furthest part of the dining-room, remaining himself in his old position. There was the same clairvoyance and success. He suddenly took off the bandages and wadding, offered to do the same thing with his back turned, and still there was the same result. His explanation was, that there was a general power of sight about his body, and that distant objects appeared close to him. During these experiments he seemed in a state of extreme nervous excitement, evidenced at times by much oscillation of the body, accompanied by short exhibitions of impatience. There was no trace of anxiety; there was mental exaltation to excess; yet apparently pleasurable.

A book was brought: the *Regne Animale* of Cuvier. He spelt slowly and with difficulty a word in the page *below* that which was open before him. The paper was equal to *very* stout letter-paper. Though but the *first*, he supposed it to have been the fifth page below. He took about ten pages between his hands: holding them up perpendicularly, under his eyes, he spelt a word in the centre of one of the central pages,—on reference, correctly. He was taken to the title-page, between which and sight three pages of thick paper interposed: he described an engraving, and fixed the date printed as 1842. On reference, a medallion portrait of Cuvier was there, *but no date*. The nervous excitement I had noticed, while he was card-playing, seemed about this time much lessened.

A card pill-box, enclosing some writing, was given. He made several attempts to decipher the MS., but was declared to have failed. The word written was "*Rouen*," given in a pointed, lady's hand, by which the letter *u* was not very distinguishable from *n*; and the whole it must be confessed, was not very legible to a French youth. I put a word, in large round letters, in the box: he asked for my hand: I was desired to will that he might know the word: he asked if there was an *a* in it? I answered, "yes:" an *s*? I answered, "yes:" he said it consisted of five letters?—again, "yes:"

he called for a pencil, and immediately wrote, "*Paris*." The same experiment was tried by another gentleman, with the word, "*France*," with a similar result.

His travelling powers were next essayed. He gave to a lady a description of a country residence; true in many singular particulars, incorrect in others. One of the truths was,—that a certain lady, whose age he accurately named, was in a certain room (which was *partially* well described)—she was neither sitting nor standing—she was unwell in bed—the cause of illness was named. To the noble lord he spoke with general accuracy of a gallery of paintings in his country-house—described two painted windows—spoke of the sun as shining on one of them, and accurately fixed which of the two. His lordship wrongly called it a cellar, but the youth insisted that it was a gallery. The look-out from the house was also described truly, except that a river before it was declared covered with boats. He was told that there were no boats—he went from "*bateaux*" to "*canards*." A lady thought that, seen at a distance, sailing boats and white-winged fowl might be confounded.

A lady, who had lost a bracelet enquired about it. He said, that she had had it about four years; first fact;—that she was accustomed to twirl it round her wrist; second fact;—that a fat lady, whose name he partially syllabled, had found it. This was doubtful; but such a name was known to the loser as possessed by a neighbour.

A more satisfactory statement concluded the experiments. A lady, related to the noble lord present, asked the number of her children? "One—a boy." "Where was he?" "In a country-house, twenty miles from London?" "With whom?" "His aunt." A mistake. He guessed again: "It was the lady's mother!" So it was. He added: "It rained where the boy was—he was, therefore, in the house: his name was D——." Everything true but the rain; and, in Regent-street, though the day was very fine then, in half an hour, we had violent showers of rain.

Alexis was now aroused.

Though I went to these experiments without prepossession, watched them without favour, and narrate them with my utmost fairness and good faith, I know I risk some character for common sense in making them known. It is dangerous to tell an extraordinary truth: still more, to affirm extraordinary things, whose demonstration falsifies opinions which have been held for ages demonstrated. But be it recollected that the farthest liberty I take is to say what I *think* I have seen. I do not expect any one to give up their reasons for

my impressions; and few, of course, will not sooner believe my impressions false than these marvels true. But, in any case, there are marvels to be believed. Whatever side taken, we must be credulous. M. Marcillet was the only person who could help a collusion. He was in a strange room, among strangers; no mechanical aids, possible of appliance. He was watched: he was separated from the patient: his voice was the only thing that could guide the youth; and he spoke little, and then but mere words of very natural encouragement. How, could any aid of M. Marcillet help Alexis to deal with such ready and instantaneous judgment with the hundred unforeseen and complicated contingencies arising in the shuffling, cutting, and playing a pack of cards? By what *chance* were his *guesses* so right? By what ingenuity of contrivance was he tutored that a box impenetrable to sight, contained a specific word out of so many thousands—a word unknown to myself one minute before writing—and *only* to myself when written? Supposing one deceived on so many successive and plain matters of obvious fact, how could so many others? But it is useless to expand on the difficulties which surround the hypothesis of fraud and collusion. If it be, *a priori*, improbable that Alexis has the power he pretends to—it is, *a priori*, improbable that under such circumstances he could achieve such tricks with ordinary capabilities. A *moral* is just as difficult of achievement as a *physical* impossibility; and there is just this to be said of the *first*, that we know much more about the laws constituting or governing it, than we do of the second. *All* may feel the difficulty of fully *believing* these phenomena: only those who have seen Alexis under such favourable circumstances as myself, can feel the difficulty of fully resisting them.

I am, Sir,

Very faithfully yours,

T. PIERS HEALEY.

2, Elm Court, Temple—July 1.

The following was sent to the *Medical Times* by the Rev. Mr. Sandby;—

Sir,—I have read with much interest the letter of Mr. Healey, that appeared in the last No. of the *Medical Times*, narrating what took place with Alexis, at M. Baillière's, the well-known publisher of Regent Street. Having been present during part of the *séance*, I can attest the general accuracy of his statement. Where, however, Mr. H. says, that the noble lord, to whom he refers, "wrongly called a place

in his country-house a *cellar*, while the youth insisted that it was a *gallery*," he misunderstood *cellar* for *salon*, thereby weakening the effect of the correct description which the *clairvoyant* gave.

As you are not unwilling to receive *facts*, perhaps you will permit me to state a few striking circumstances that occurred on Tuesday, the 2nd inst., at a private *reunion*, in Welbeck Street.

Alexis was bandaged most carefully: cotton-wool and handkerchiefs were not merely placed over and below the eyes, but over and *below the nose*: and, in this state, he read six or seven lines, out of a French book, opened at random, with an ease and a rapidity of utterance that I could scarcely imitate in my own language. He repeated the experiment with another passage, when the hand of a gentleman was interposed between the face and the volume, and he succeeded completely. He read a few words, through five or six thick pages of the same volume; and this he did two or three times, not failing once.

The room was rather full, and Alexis, being greatly oppressed by the heat, threw off the bandages, and remained the rest of the morning with his eyes unfettered: and now came the more astounding occurrences.

A lady, of my acquaintance, wrote the word "*Alexis*," and placed the paper in a tortoise-shell card-case; and in a short time the youth read the word *through the card-case*. The card was torn, and he said it was *dechiré*. The card-case was never out of the lady's sight, till he gave the name.

A gentleman placed a thick envelope, sealed up, with the word "*Marie*," written upon a slip of paper inserted in it: Alexis was not long before he detected what the word was.

But it is to the following striking fact that I more particularly direct your attention.

An officer, of long standing in the army, who was severely wounded at Waterloo, and is well known in the highest military circles, was one of the company present. He was an unbeliever, and knew nothing of mesmerism, and had never seen or scarcely heard of Alexis,—but having been accidentally invited to join the party, and been told that the young man had the power of reading through opaque objects, he determined to bring his talent rigidly to the test.

He produced a morocco case, eight inches long, and an inch and a half thick, looking like a surgical instrument case, or a small jewel-case. It was placed in the hands of Alexis, who held it for a short time in silence, and then gradually and slowly gave the following description:—

"The object within the case is a hard substance."

"It is folded in an envelope."

"The envelope is whiter than the thing itself." (The envelope was a piece of silver-paper.)

"It is a kind of ivory."

"It has a point (piquè) at one end" (which is the case).

"It is a bone."

"Taken from a body"—

"From a human body"—

"From your body."

"The bone has been separated and cut, so as to leave a *flat side*."

This was true: the bone, which was a piece of the colonel's leg, and sawed off after the wound, is *flat* towards the part that enclosed the marrow.

Here, Alexis removed the piece of bone from the case, and placed his finger on a part, and said, "The ball struck *here*." (True.)

"It was an extraordinary ball, as to its effect."

"You received *three* separate injuries at the same moment." (Which was the case, for the ball broke or burst into three pieces, and injured the colonel in three places in the same leg.)

"You were wounded in the *early part* of the day, whilst charging the enemy." (Which was the fact.)

Here the description ended: and what does the sceptic reply to our statement? That M. Marcillet, as a colleague, was assisting Alexis? M. Marcillet, in common with every other person in the room, was himself ignorant of what the case contained.—That the gallant officer was in collusion? It were a waste of time to meet so monstrous a suggestion.—That Alexis had learned by accident, and before-hand, what the case contained? The thing was impossible: no one in the room was aware of the contents: only two or three persons present were acquainted with the colonel, and he and Alexis had never before met.

There is but one answer to the whole transaction, viz.: that CLAIRVOYANCE IS A FACT IN NATURE—a real existing fact in philosophy—be the explanation what it may.

At the same time, it must be said, that the *power is not always on Alexis*: it varies greatly—many things act with a disturbing effect—he guesses—he makes mistakes—he is sometimes wholly wrong: this must be admitted. But a hundred failures cannot upset four or five positive facts: those facts are certain: yet still it must be owned that this singular power is not always upon the young man.

It is easy to say, that the thing is an impossibility—that it is contrary to the laws of Nature: the question recurs—What are the laws of Nature?—and what is an impossibility?

One thing certainly seems an impossibility; where a man has committed himself to the opinion, that “mesmerism *shall* not be true,” it seems *impossible*, even by the strongest and most unequivocal evidence, to bring him to a candid and willing confession of his error.

The facts, above stated, can be corroborated by several gentlemen who were present.

I enclose you my own card and address, and the name of the gallant officer who produced the morocco case, and beg to subscribe myself,

Your humble servant,

CLERICUS.

July 8th, 1844.

Lord Adare has obliged me with his notes of this interview:—

July 2.—I saw Alexis at the house of M. Dupuis. He was bandaged as usual. After various performances with cards, a book was opened and held upright before him, which he read with great rapidity. He was then asked to read some words through several pages, and a book was opened; he felt about on the page with his fingers, and said “*Literature Espagnol.*” We found these words twenty-seven leaves off. He then read words enclosed in envelopes and in a visiting case, given him by different persons. One gentleman declared he would believe nothing unless Alexis could read a word that he would give him, and he handed him an envelope. Alexis turned it about, and said “This contains a visiting card; I cannot clearly read the English word, but I will run a pin through the letter *h* which I see, and also through the centre of the address.” This he did quite accurately. A lady gave him a letter; he took her hand; she asked how long the letter had been written: “About two months.” It was two and a half. He then said it was written by a relation,—a brother, (yes), who was very very far off, beyond the sea, (He is in India); he wears a costume “*très curieux.*” He then described his face and appearance, and the lady said she could not have described him better herself.

Col. Llewellyn, who was I believe rather sceptical, produced a morocco case, something like a surgical instrument case. Alexis took it, placed it to his stomach, and said “The object is a hard substance, not white, enclosed in something

more white than itself. It is a bone, taken from a greater body; a human bone,—yours; it has been separated, and cut so as to leave a flat side.” Alexis opened the case, took out a piece of bone wrapped in silver-paper, and said, “The ball struck here; it was an extraordinary ball in effect; you received three separate injuries at the same moment; the bone was broken into three pieces; you were wounded early in the day, whilst engaged in charging the enemy.” He also described the dress of the soldiers, and was right in all these particulars. This excited the astonishment of all the bystanders, especially the gallant Colonel.

This account is drawn up not only from my own notes, but from Col. Llewellyn’s statement made after the *séance*, and from a written account given me by a lady who was sitting close by.

The following was given me by a lady who was present at a private exhibition of Alexis in Welbeck Street.

Alexis took a letter I offered to him, concerning the writer of which M. Marcillet informed him I was anxious to learn all the information he could afford me. He took hold of my hand, and looking at the letter for a moment, he told me I had received the letter more than a fortnight since, —nearly a month indeed had elapsed since it had reached me; that it came *d’ontre mer*, a very long way, and had been written two months. The writer was a gentleman—some connexion—nearly related—in fact he was my brother. I then asked Alexis whether the gentleman was in good health, and whether he could describe him to me. He at once replied, after looking intently as if he saw some object in front of him, “I see him very plain; he is about 35.” To which I objected, saying he was very much younger. “Then he is at least 28 or 30; he certainly looks as old,—older than you. I added he was still wrong, but that the gentleman certainly looked that age; had always been considered to have the appearance of being eight or ten years older than he in reality was; (a remark which has been most frequently and forcibly made by the greater part of his acquaintance). Alexis proceeded to say he was neither short nor tall, (*gros*), with dark eyes, very long hair (*fonée*) which he continually cast off his face by throwing back his head, an action which he imitated as he spoke, and which was a most fixed and continual habit with my brother in reading. He in reply to an enquiry whether he was pale or not, said “*Oh, non; c’est un beau teint.*” He described him to be living in a house, and not very far from an island; and that he had been very lately on

board some vessel. His dress he said was white, but something green he had which he could not discover. "*Mais que c'est drôle, dites-moi donc et que c'est.*" I was unable to assist him with the solution of the enigma, which seemed to have made so great an impression that he twice returned to the subject, after having made other remarks, with the observation, "*Mais que cela en embarrasse c'est une chose si drôle que peut être.*" Alexis, after repeating that the person had been at sea, told me I had not seen my brother for some time,—that it was full two years and a half since we parted; that I might rest satisfied he was in perfect health, and that he wished I could tell him what the green colour which embarrassed him in the dress was; returned me my letter, with the assurance that he would be happy to give me further information to-morrow. In addition, I can only say that in every assertion that Alexis made he was borne out by the facts; the time of departure and arrival of the letter was quite correct. The position of my brother's residence being singularly true, he being about 100 miles from the Island of Bombay. It was but little more than two years and a half, since my brother and myself had separated; and if I had wished to describe him I could not have used any language more appropriate, even to the peculiarity which he had of continually shaking from off his face his very long hair. Concerning Alexis' assertion, that he had been lately "*Sur un navire,*" I can only say, I have every reason to believe, that about the time specified by Alexis—the end of June or beginning of July—my brother did cross from the main land to Bombay.

The following is an account of what occurred at Lady Blessington's, and was given me by Count d'Orsay:

Alexis, having been put in a state of somnambulism, had a large piece of cotton wool placed over each eye, after which three handkerchiefs were closely bound on; he then rose from his chair, and placing himself at the table, proceeded to open a new pack of cards, which he shuffled and arranged with greater rapidity than his antagonist; he played two or three games of *écarté*, winning each time, and telling, not only his own cards, but those of the other person.

One of the guests took from the shelf the first book that presented itself; Alexis, then, with his eyes bandaged and his outspread hand placed on the page, read the passage which the hand covered. It was then proposed that he should, without turning the leaf, read what was printed four pages beyond the one before him. He agreed, but said he would prefer taking off the bandages, as the heat greatly incom-

moded him. This being done, he, still looking at the page before him, read slowly, but correctly, two lines of verse, which were indeed found on the fifth page from the one open.

A gentleman then placing himself *en rapport* with him, by taking his hand, asked him to describe his room; but in this he failed, evidently guessing at random instead of employing *clairvoyance*. A folded paper containing the word "Marguerite" was then given him, and another with a sketch of a fox: the first he said contained a word with ten letters, but he could not read it; the second he described as an animal—he believed a dog—sitting down.

Another person then took his hand, and pointing to a gentleman, (whose name Alexis did not know,) asked him to describe a certain picture in his apartment. He said he saw a very large picture without a frame; at one side was a great building, from the windows of which men were firing; in the centre was a man on horseback—*an dèse de l'école Polytechnique*, and round him were a number of men. The building was the Louvre, and the scene represented the French Revolution of 1830. All these particulars were correct to the letter, and he described some others, which I do not at this moment recollect, but which were equally true. He was then asked by the same person to describe another picture. He said it was large, but not so large as the preceding one: it was a portrait representing a man in a very singular costume,—full length. He could not exactly describe the costume, but it was dark, with a great deal of white in front, and a white stiff ruff round the neck: the wearer was fair, with the hair thrown back from the temples, and with large whiskers:—this was equally correct. Upon being asked whether the original of the picture was in the room, and if he could point him out; he replied that he was, and that if all the persons present would come and take his hand, he could tell which it was; this he did without hesitation. He then described the adjoining room, the pictures, their position, dress, &c.

A lady, of whose name he was ignorant, then took his hand, and at her request he described with *tolerable* accuracy the position of her house, its proximity to the sea, its distance from London, &c. He said there were five young ladies in the house, four of them her daughters; the name of the eldest was spelt with five letters, but he then corrected himself, and said in English it had only four; that it was *Marie*, or *Mary* in English. He then told the names of the other three according to their ages, which was the more extraordinary, as two of the three were English names which

he had never heard before. He then read the word "Marguerite," which had at first puzzled him, made out a second word, and also a playing card closely enveloped in paper, describing not only the face, but the colour or pattern of the back.

I received the following account from Dr. Edward Johnson :

Stanstead Bury House,
July 24th, 1844.

Dear Sir,—I am requested by M. Marcillet, and by several ladies and gentlemen, to write to you on the subject of an exhibition of his peculiar powers lately made by Alexis (17th inst.) before a large and highly respectable party, at which I was present; the motive for writing to you being simply the performance of an act of justice to the exhibitor, and to those who do not consider him an impostor. Immediately after he had been thrown into the mesmeric condition, I applied a large roll of cotton-wool over each eye, fixing the rolls in their position by means of two folded handkerchiefs bound tightly round the head and over the eyes, their lower edge extending down to the tip of the nose. He then took his place at a card table, opposite to a sceptical friend of mine, who had agreed to play a game of *écarté* with him. As yet there were no cards. These I had in my own pocket—a new pack which had never yet been unsealed. I had bought them in London the day before, and they had never left my pocket until the moment that they were called for. I now tore off the sealed envelope, and placed them on the table. Alexis immediately took them up, and rapidly prepared them for *écarté*, by discarding all the two's, three's, &c. He did this rapidly and without any hesitation. Once he threw out a wrong card, but immediately discovered the mistake and picked it up again, and replaced it in the pack. He told his adversary every card he held in his hand. A gentleman, after the game was over, took a card secretly from the pack, and placed it on the table, the blank side upwards. Alexis immediately told him it was the nine of hearts, and it was so. A gentleman (the same who had played at *écarté*) now produced from his pocket a sealed packet, and said, "This sealed envelope contains another sealed envelope, and this second contains a third also sealed, and the third contains a piece of paper on which I have written one word, which no eye has seen but my own. I have had it in my pocket ever since I sealed it, and I now desire to know from Alexis what is the

word which I have written." Alexis took the packet in his hand, and with the other grasped the hand of the gentleman. Within a minute and a half, or, at most, two minutes, he said, "The word is *Hellène*." It was so. A lady in the company had given to a gentleman a small nosegay, *before Alexis arrived*, saying, "This I send by you to Alexis—wear it in your button-hole till he comes; take an opportunity of giving it to him when we are all assembled, and request him to discover, if he can, from which of the company it has been sent." When the exhibition was about half over, the gentleman suddenly presented the nosegay to Alexis, and made the desired request. Alexis immediately rose, and went round the circle, taking hold of the hand of each for a moment or so, and then letting it go. No person in the room, except the lady and the gentleman above mentioned, knew anything of the matter. When he came to the lady who really sent it, he hesitated, and held her hand a long time—then took the hand of the next lady, and hesitated again—then recurred to the real lady—then went and sat down apparently disappointed. It was remarked that these two ladies were sitting hand in hand, and when this observation was made they separated their hands—and instantly, with a slight exclamation, Alexis rose and walked rapidly over straight to the true lady, and thanked her for having given him the flowers. Several similar experiments were now made by others; pins, brooches, rings, &c., were secretly sent him, and he never once failed to discover, merely by feeling the hands of the company, from whom each article had come. He did this quickly, and with great precision. He astonished one lady by telling her that "*the ring which she had sent him, was a joint present from two persons—that these two persons were her sister and brother-in-law—that it was given to her in South America, and in the town of Rio Janeiro,*"—and it was so. These are a few of the very extraordinary things which he did, to which I have nothing to add except that I am perfectly sure he could not see with his eyes, and that any kind of collusion was utterly impossible. For my own part, I do not find it a whit more difficult to believe that the brain may be occasionally endowed with an extra faculty or sense, just as easily as the foot with an extra toe, the hand with an extra finger, or the breast with an extra nipple—which we know occasionally happens. But of the nature of this extra sense we can no more conceive than a blind man can conceive of colours, or deaf men of sounds.

I am, dear Sir,

Very truly yours,

EDWARD JOHNSON.

This letter was afterwards sent me by the Rev. H. B. Sims. My Dear Sir,—I have to thank you for the opportunity you kindly afforded me of perusing Dr. Johnson's letter, containing an account of some mesmeric phenomena, exhibited by Alexis at Stanstead Bury. Having been present, I have great pleasure in adding my testimony to that of Dr. Johnson, as to the complete success of Alexis on this occasion, and I can also bear witness to the fidelity and accuracy with which the various instances of clairvoyance are detailed. But one case, which as it is not mentioned by that gentleman, did not I presume fall under his immediate cognizance, is I think too curious and too conclusive to remain unrecorded. A lady, residing in this neighbourhood, who had never before witnessed any mesmeric experiments, brought with her a casket which she had enveloped in a piece of printed paper and carefully sealed up. She presented it to Alexis, and asked him what it contained. He said, "Something white and hard: that it was metallie, but not of the precious metals; had two faces (figures) upon it, one of a man, the other a female face; and that he saw on the other side something *entrelassée*." He added that it had been made about a year. The paper was then taken off, and the casket opened. It proved to contain a medal struck on occasion of the launch of the Great Britain steam-ship, which took place within six or seven days, just a year before. It had on one side heads of the Queen and Prince Albert, on the reverse a representation of the steam-ship, which with its shrouds and rigging, was well described by the term, *entrelassée*. He also wrote down, before the seal was broken, two English words, which on opening the paper were found to form part of what was printed upon it.

The *séance* lasted nearly three hours, during which time Alexis had been exercising his power of clairvoyance, in a great variety of ways, without, as I believe, a single failure: though he made a few unimportant mistakes while playing at cards. The company present, about forty in number, were so satisfied that they would not allow him to continue his exhibition, though he was perfectly willing to have done so, the mesmeric influence appearing unimpaired.

You asked me for some details of an interview I had with Alexis last year in Paris, where I first became acquainted with him. I was, previously, an obstinate unbeliever in the clairvoyant wonders of mesmerism; but having one evening heard some very startling facts related by a person whose veracity I could not question, I resolved to pay Alexis a visit the following morning, that I might, from personal experience,

form an opinion on the truth or falsehood of what I had so long disbelieved. I was accompanied by a friend, and we had a private *séance*. Alexis was in a very few minutes placed in the mesmeric trance, and having had his eyes carefully bandaged, played at *écarté*, read from a book, &c. &c., with great success and facility. I then sat down by him, and asked to have some conversation with him. He took my hand. I asked him if he could tell me where I lived. After a good deal of hesitation he said, "North-east of London;" and gave the distance very correctly in leagues. He then said, "There is a railroad which leads to your part of the country. There are two branches to this railroad, and your house is situated on the left branch; and on the right side of that branch—" He then called for a sheet of paper, and began to draw a map of the part of the country he was describing. He delineated the railway with great correctness, marking the branch which turns off eastward at Stratford, and continuing the other to a point where he said there was a station. He gave a very minute account of the position of this station, answering in all points to that of Roydon; the river running nearly parallel to it, and the bridge immediately in front: and he also described with much truth the general character and appearance of the surrounding country, and said that the railroad extended only three or four leagues from this point, which is the fact. He then marked on his chart another station, a few miles farther on, and gave exactly the relative distant and position of my house with these two stations. He then said, "Now let us go to your house," and proceeded to give a sketch of the road with its various turnings. As he approached the house he was more minute, and described with singular correctness the sudden descent; the brook about half as wide as the road, the steep ascent on the other side, and the gateway on the right hand of the road. He gave the distance of the house from the gateway very exactly, mentioned a piece of water on the right with ducks upon it, (I keep a few wild-ducks,) and described the position of the stables, &c. The perfect accuracy of the whole of this minute description was truly astonishing.

I then asked him if there was any one living in the house during my absence from home. He said, "Yes; there was only one person—a gentleman," (which was the fact); and he then proceeded to state his age and describe his character and appearance, as correctly as if he had been well and personally known to him. I should mention that the gentleman who accompanied me was entirely unacquainted with this part of England; that I had not mentioned to him the subject on

which I proposed to question Alexis; and, in fact, that neither to him nor to any soul in Paris but myself, were the foregoing particulars known. The *séance* had now lasted of nearly an hour; and the mesmeric influence appeared to be on the wane. He began to make mistakes, and I would not suffer him to proceed, being perfectly satisfied with what he had already done, and entertaining a firm conviction, which has been strengthened by subsequent experience, that he really possesses the power he professes to exercise.

I am no mesmerist: till I myself witnessed these things, no one could be more incredulous on the subject; but I should not be doing justice either to Alexis or M. Marcillet, who have been unfairly stigmatized as cheats and impostors, if I hesitated to declare my firm belief that the former is endowed with a most wonderful and mysterious faculty, extending far beyond what we have hitherto considered the limits of those powers which have been granted by providence to the human race.

I am, my dear Sir,
faithfully Yours,

Parndon, Dec. 20, 1844.

HENRY B. SIMS.

The following is an account of what occurred at the house of my friend the Rev. Thos. Robertson, of Blandford Square, and was drawn up by another friend, Mr. Kirby of Blandford Square, and approved by Mr. Robertson:—

On the 9th of July last, Alexis exhibited his extraordinary powers at the house of a gentleman in Blandford Square, before a party of about thirty ladies and gentlemen, at eight in the evening.

Being placed in an easy chair M. Marcillet, the operator, put Alexis into the mesmeric sleep, by what appeared to be a strong effort of the will, communicated by a fixed look, without any passes whatever. This was effected in about ten minutes, after many convulsions of the face, which were anything but agreeable to look upon.

The business of the evening began with the usual experiments of rendering rigid the muscles of the arms and legs, the legs being made to support the weight of another person, &c.

In the act of bandaging the eyes, preparatory to playing on cards, the anxiety on the part of some of the company to make assurance doubly sure, was so great as to annoy Alexis; and after many efforts to satisfy the most sceptical, the bandages were thrown off altogether, Alexis refusing to have any, and he sat down to *écarté*, his eyes closed but unbound, and

played two or three games, his own cards with their faces turned down upon the table; he every time selected the card to be played correctly, with one exception, and only once or twice held his cards with their faces towards him, as a player would do in the natural state. The game abruptly terminated by his adversary desiring to increase the difficulty by covering his own cards with an additional row of cards; this greatly irritated Alexis, who, as interpreted by M. Marcillet, was annoyed at this additional proof of a predetermination to believe that the whole was a trick or wilful deception.

One of the company put into his hands a sheet of paper folded several times, so as to prevent a knowledge of what was written within by an effort of ordinary vision: the words written were "*Vin de Champagne*." After turning the paper about in his hands for some time, putting it to his chest, &c., he said the first word began with *V* and contained three letters, by degrees he declared the whole correctly. A box and other packets were produced of which he did not succeed in declaring the contents, but a watch case being put into his hand by the lady of the house, he proceeded to state that it contained a small thing enclosing some hair which was grey, and that round a circle of gold were engraved the names of a lady and gentleman with a date, the year being 1808, and the month abbreviated, ending with *y* "*(y grec)*." When told he was wrong in the year, he corrected himself by saying it was 1809, and in this he was right. He was then told the hair was not grey, being that of a young person, but he persisted in saying that the hair was grey, and when the case was opened it was found to enclose a very small locket containing hair of a greyish appearance from having become mildewed; a very small inscription engraved on the rim of the locket, difficult for any one to read, contained the names of a lady and gentleman with the date of January, 1809. This must be considered a very successful experiment, the object having been in possession of the gentleman of the house, immediately before it was put into his hand, and the apparent errors having been satisfactorily explained.

But the most interesting and valuable experiment was the following, because the gentleman who applied it, one of the most sceptical, had declared that he should be perfectly satisfied of the genuine clairvoyance of Alexis if it succeeded. This gentleman took from his pocket a small French book, entitled, "*Le petit Carême de Massillon*," and desired Alexis to read the title page, over which he had placed firmly a sheet of writing paper doubled so as effectually to conceal the print from ordinary vision. Alexis applied the book to his chest,

afterwards to the back of his head, and in a very gradual manner, but in a short time, read the title correctly.

The master of the house put himself *en rapport* with Alexis, by taking his hand and then desired him to tell him what he found in his dining room, the *séance* being in the drawing room above. Alexis described most accurately the position of the door, windows, &c., and then said "*Il-y-a trois tables, une grande et deux petites,*" this was correct. He mentioned correctly also the pictures, &c., he said there was a bust of a gentleman in one corner, which looked like the bust of a dead rather than a living man; that there was a table between the windows, on which were three books, one without a cover. The room had been arranged in these particulars by the gentleman of the house for the purpose of the experiment, and to guard against the accidental entry into that room of Alexis on his arrival, he had locked the door and pocketed the key. The description was most accurate throughout, the peculiar appearance of the bust being accounted for by its being a plaster cast from life *with the eyes closed*. Another gentleman asked Alexis to accompany him to his house (in the same Square but this was not told him), he immediately said there were trees in front—a park; and when desired to describe the dining room, he said there were two windows, &c. &c. He erred in the colour of the curtains, but told the gentleman that there was a picture containing two figures—lovers; the lady with something in her hand—roses, picking them to pieces and throwing them down (describing the manner by gesture). All this is a most accurate description of the last Art Union print, and what is curious the gentleman denied at first there was such an article, having only lately placed it there. The erroneous part of his description was that the man had a poignard in a belt—a belt there is but no poignard. At first he declared the dresses were those of savages; when told he was wrong, he said they were Spanish or Italian. He was then told there was a piece of art over the fire-place in the same room, when he said "*Oui c'est en plâtre—il-y-a deux figures, une femme et un petit amour, il-y-a encore une autre figure, c'est un animal fabuleux, pas tout visible.*" Now this is so near the fact as to be quite astonishing considering that Alexis had never been in the house referred to, and received not the smallest hint except that above mentioned. The object referred to is a group in plaster, by Davis, expressive of maternal affection,—a female in great horror endeavours to crush a serpent with her foot, while a little boy entirely naked with its back to the spectator clings to her. When he was told the third figure was not that of a fabulous animal,

he said, "*c'est un viseau*," and finally "*c'est un serpent*." The serpent is not wholly visible, and with the exception of a wrong notion of it, which he at length corrected, the description was strikingly correct.

The experiments concluded by his telling the Christian names of several ladies present, which he did accurately with more or less labour; the name of one gentleman he failed to give, apparently because the name was different in English than in French. Towards the close of the evening a young lady placed in his hands a piece of paper, doubled up several times, in which she had written in pencil, "*Vous êtes gentil*," he did not declare this, not apparently because he could not, but waived it by saying, "*Ce là ne vaut pas la peine*."

On the one hand, though it cannot be asserted that he did not fail in several matters put before him, he succeeded in others to a surprising extent, not to be accounted for as the act of a conjuror, as sleight-of-hand, or fraud, or by collusion with others,—founded in either of these it might fairly be expected that the tricks would have been better performed. The vision obtained though out of ordinary course appears to be limited and imperfect; the answers are more clearly given to those who are *en rapport* with him, and who fix their own minds exclusively on the things or ideas treated of.

Report of an Interview with Alexis, July 19, 1844, at the house of John Auldjo, Esq., F.R.S. Drawn up by that Gentleman himself; and published first in the Medical Times, and now with his permission republished, with some emendations by Mr. Auldjo.

"Multa sunt Naturæ miracula incomptæ rationis, et in Naturæ majestate penitus abdita."

"——— and art thou shocked at mysteries
The greatest—thou——"

"——— Truths——"

By truths enlighten'd and sustain'd, afford
An arch-like, strong foundation, to support
The incumbent weight of absolute, complete
Conviction; here, the more we press, we stand
More firm; who most examine, most believe.
Parts, like half sentences, confound, the whole
Conveys the sense."

[The following report was written immediately after the interview, and has been corrected by most of the party who were present. Of that party, consisting of twenty-eight, seven ladies and eleven gentlemen were perfect unbelievers in the powers of mesmerism, and particularly in those of clairvoyance. The remaining ten, six ladies and four gentlemen, were not sceptical, some having seen cases of mesmerism,

and two or three having witnessed successful exhibitions of clairvoyance.

Fair and courteous means were resorted to by the unbelievers to test the powers of Alexis as a clairvoyant, and detect what they believed to be imposture. The success of the greater part of the tests he was subjected to, was not only extraordinary but convincing—every one was satisfied, that there was no imposture, no collusion; but that there did exist a very wonderful, though inexplicable power; and as was observed by one of the gentlemen present, "it would be irrational to set down as imposture everything which we cannot account for; this principle would stifle all discovery."

An arrangement having been made for Alexis to exhibit his powers of clairvoyance to a party of ladies and gentlemen, on the afternoon of the 19th of July, a piece of fine chamois leather was procured, some cotton, such as is used for the wadding of ladies' dresses, three large silk handkerchiefs were got ready, and a very strong solution of gum was prepared. Neither Alexis nor Monsieur Marcillet had ever been in the house, or had been seen by any of the party, except two, and that only in public, at one of the exhibitions in Mortimer-street. The party, in the drawing-room, having assembled, to the number of twenty-eight, Alexis was introduced, and having been put into a state of lucid somnambulism by Monsieur Marcillet, his eyes were covered with two circular pieces of the chamois leather, well moistened with the gum. The leather was so placed as to cover the ball of the eye (the upper eyelid being closed over the ball), the eyebrows, and the cheek down to the edge of the nostril; over the leather was placed a quantity of cotton, covering the whole, and extending to the mouth. The silk handkerchiefs were then tied over, so that two were across the eyes transversely, coming on each side below the nose, and by the corners of the mouth, and under the ears. The third was bound round the head horizontally over the other, covering the top of the nose, and was tied over the ears, keeping the other two in their position. There was thus left only space sufficient for respiration, and every one in the room felt certain that his eyes were covered in such a manner that it was impossible for him to see by any movements or contortions of the cheek; he did not make any, nor did he attempt to displace the bandaging, and particular care was taken to prevent his interfering with it.

Being seated at a card table, a pack of cards were taken at hazard from among several other packs, in a card-box, belonging to the house, each pack being still in its stamped cover, so that the possibility of the cards having been tam-

pered with, or even seen by Alexis, or Monsier Marcillet, is out of the question. The cards had coloured backs, and were of the ordinary thickness of English playing cards. The cover being taken off and the pack placed on the table, Alexis observed, "they were not *écarté* cards," and proceeded to separate with rapidity the small cards, which were unnecessary for that game, (all under seven, except the ace) from the rest, making two mistakes in his haste, which he himself observed and corrected. He then cut for deal with the gentleman who had sat down to play with him; he played four games, naming the cards in his adversary's hands, choosing cards from the whole pack when he required a few more cards, selecting trump cards for himself, and low ones of other suits for his adversary, naming the cards of both hands, those of his own having their faces to the table and unturned, and, in fact, satisfying the most sceptical, that the whole pack, with its back towards him, was as visible to him blindfolded, as if the faces of the cards were exposed to his common sight. He then played three games with another gentleman, and made two or three mistakes, such as selecting three spades from the pack, when he had thrown away three cards, believing spades to be trumps, when clubs were, and finding out his error, acknowledged he had mistaken the turned-up card. He then named cards in his adversary's hands, mistaking, however, the knave of hearts for the queen on one occasion. He also named cards with their faces on the table, selecting particular cards from the pack, and played his game, naming his cards without touching them.

No one else being desirous of playing with him, a book was taken at hazard off a table near at hand, which book it was impossible that Alexis or Marcillet could have examined previously. It was about to be opened by a gentleman, and given to him, but Alexis said, as soon as the book was brought near him, "*nous sommes dans le Department des Landes*," and putting it open on the top of his head, immediately said there was a picture of two men on stilts, and that they were *les habitants des Landes*, and that this was, also, the title of the descriptive part on the next page. This was so, and the work *Les François peint par eux memes*.

Several sheets of letter paper, doubly folded, were then thrust into the closed volume, and opened at the part where the paper was inserted, the paper completely covering the letter-press; he then, with a pencil, wrote a line, which, he said, contained the words of a line of the printed page underneath; on removing the paper, it proved to be correct. He, also, pierced the writing paper with a pin, so as to transfix two or

three of the words which he previously mentioned, "correctly." During the whole of the exhibition, up to this time, it is to be recollected that the bandages were over the eyes.

The handkerchiefs were now removed; the gum having flowed a little from underneath the leather, the cotton was found gummed to the skin of the cheek, near the nose, and the leather adhered firmly in every part over the eye, so that there was not the slightest possibility of his seeing in any way from under it. One leather was removed with much trouble by a sponge and hot water, at the same time, giving him pain. Calling Monsieur Marcillet to him, he desired him to magnetise the other eye to a state of insensibility, which, being done, the remaining leather was torn from the eye-lash, brow, and cheek, without his flinching or showing any feeling of pain, though the lids, lashes, and brows were much raised in the operation, and one or two of the lashes and some hairs of the eyebrow were torn away.

His eyes were now open, and after a few minutes' delay a sealed envelope was given him by a gentleman who had brought it with him, and could not divulge to any one present what it contained; after examining it some time, he said there were two words, but they might, also, pass for one; that they were French; he said if the gentleman who wrote it, and who, he said, was so firm an unbeliever that his influence affected him, would go into the next room, and whisper it to the lady of the house, and she would come and give him her hand he would be able to write the word for her. This being done, he wrote the word *clairvoyance*; she said he was wrong. "True," said he, "I ought to have written it on the envelope, *clairvoyant*," and so corrected it. On opening the envelope, the word was found to be correct, written on a sheet of note paper, folded up.

Another envelope, brought to the house as the others had been ready sealed, containing a sheet of note paper, was presented to him, containing three words, one of which he was requested to read; after some time, he said he would take the last one. He held the hand of the lady who wrote the words, asking, "*Est-ce vous, est-ce vous-même qui l'avez écrit?*" and then wrote down the word "Rossini," and said, "*Vous voyez que je fais l'fs comme la-votre.*" A foreigner would generally have written it so, *ss*. He then said he would put a pin through the four first letters. On breaking the seal, and opening the envelope, the last of the three words was Rossini, and he had put a pin through the first four letters.

Other envelopes, containing paper, written upon, were

shown him, but he made an excuse for not reading them, that there were too many words. Monsieur Marcelet explained, and said, if a line of writing happened to be folded in the middle, the letters would cross over each other in so intricate a manner, that it would be difficult if not impossible for Alexis to decypher them, or in fact any one else, and is a difficulty not likely to occur in a printed book. An instance of this occurred to a gentleman present, who had been at one of the public exhibitions. He had, on that occasion, written three words on a sheet of note-paper, and placed them in an envelope, and then examined it with a strong light, but no part of the writing was visible. It was submitted to Alexis. After a few moments, he said, (not knowing, nor ever having seen the gentleman before), it is not English, nor French, but Italian, and said there were three words, the first beginning with a "C." He was desired to write down, and he wrote "Che," and then said, that it was impossible to make out the other two, but it looked like "ra—rasa;" that they were "*pliés l'un sur l'autre*," and he could not make them out; he was requested to stick a pin through them, which he did, and on opening the envelope it was found that the two words "*sara sara*," were folded over each other, so that they made "*ra sa rasa*," the sentence being, "*Che sara, sara*." To return from this digression: Alexis made several guesses at one or two unsuccessfully, and then gave them up. In reading from the book, he asked no questions; from the owners of the sealed packets, various questions, as to number of letters, &c., and the suggestion naturally arose, and was put by one of the party, if he really can mentally see, why ask leading questions? To which it may be answered that he does not see with that facility which the natural common sight possesses, but only by a great effort of that second spirit, or power, whatever it may be, which he has, and which is not under the perfect controul of his own will, but is directed to the effort in obedience to a superior and overruling influence—that of the magnetizer: for instance, one of the sealed packets given him contained the word "*L'Imagination*." After some time, and asking if it was not a word of seven letters, then of ten, he wrote on the packet "*Cr dul*," perhaps meaning the word "*L'Incredible*," which does not resemble it. He was told the letters were not correct, but the packet was put aside, without a further attempt to decypher it, although Monsieur Marcelet was very anxious that he should persevere.

The next questions put to Alexis were with the object of testing his power of visiting and describing different localities.

He was asked to describe the room of a lady present. After some hesitation, he pointed out the position of the fire-place, and that of the bed with regard to it, and made an attempt to describe some paintings on the chimney-piece. He said one was the portrait of a soldier, which was wrong, though one answering to his description was in the room beneath. Baffled in his efforts, and making several wrong descriptions, he said he would leave the room and return to it again later. An opera-glass case was then given him, containing some article, not a glass. After examining it some time, he saw it was something that was of two metals, something red and yellow, it was something wrapped up, but he could not say exactly what it was. It was wrapped in paper, and the paper was then removed, but it did not facilitate his saying what it was. This was an instance of complete failure; it was a gold ring with a gold band, the two exterior fingers extended, the middle ones and thumb closed upon the palm—a Neapolitan charm against the Evil Eye. It was suggested by one of the ladies that the influence attributed to this charm counteracted his power also, and prevented his seeing the ring, and shewed the efficacy of that protection so carefully used by the Neapolitans.

Deh guardiamci in tutte l'ore,
Da chi mal segno il Fattore.

He was then asked by another lady to describe her room; he said, after some reflection, that she was a Romanist, and, describing her room correctly, said there was a thing on the chimney-piece which was black, of metal—it was iron, and proceeded to describe such particulars of it, that all present, though few knew the lady to be a Catholic, concluded it was a crucifix. He did not at first discover it, seeming to have a difficulty in finding a name for it, but at last said what it was—and that there was a figure in white on it, very small, and that a chaplet of flowers, or leaves, was on it; it was a crucifix, and the lady had that morning put a chaplet of flowers upon it.

He was now requested to return to the first lady's room: and on this second attempt to describe the picture he had been asked about, he told the lady to sit down by him, and took her hand. M. Marcillet desired her to fix her thoughts firmly upon it. "*Pensez-y bien, fixez bien vos idées sur le Portrait.*" Alexis said. "*C'est brun, c'est noir et blanc, ce n'est pas coloré, c'est une Lithographie. La Lithographie n'est pas Anglaise.*" This was correct. "*Elle est Française.*" Non. "*Mais oui, c'est à dire faite pas un Français.*" Right.

"*Il y a des lettres en bas, ce n'est pas Français*"—right—"c'est de l'Anglais, non, non c'est du Latin, c'est son nom." All this was right. He then described exactly hair, beard, and moustache, admired the countenance, repeating several times, "*C'est une belle tête, il est beau, le front est beau;*" said he was not alive, but made some mistakes as to the length of time he had ceased to exist, saying 100 or 200 years, or more. He then suddenly exclaimed, "*Il est ici;*" the lady looked round the room, which was hung with pictures, but said "No." Alexis insisted. "*Mais oui, je vous dis qu'il est ici,*" pointing through the floor, "*Il est dans la Chambre en bas, je le vois.*" The lady proposed going down to see, she alone knowing what picture it was; but he would not let her draw away her hand, and said, "*Non, non, n'allez pas, attendez, je vais vous dire,*" and then with a strong expression of reverence and solemnity, he said, "*C'est le Christ.*" The plate is a lithograph published at Naples, representing the head of our Saviour, from a portrait which was supposed to have been taken from the life, and sent to the King of the Abagari, by order of Tiberius. It has only the head, has neither neck nor hands; has moustache, a beard, and flowing locks, and three rays of glory proceeding from the temples and upper part of the head. The description below it, is in Latin, and is, *VERA IMAGO SALVATORIS DNI NRI IESUS XTI AD REGEM ABAGARUM MISSA*, and this copy in the lady's possession was given to her several years ago in Naples. After Alexis had finished his *séance*, it was asked if there was one, such as he described, in the house, and it was believed there was not. The lady, however, accompanied by another and the gentlemen of the house, left the room to go down to the library in search of it, and in a portfolio which had not been opened for a long time, was found the copy indicated by Alexis, among some lithographs, the existence of which had been quite forgotten. The lady, to whom the print described by Alexis belonged, was not present when this duplicate was found, having turned back, after going half-way down stairs, to ask Alexis not to go away before it had been ascertained whether there was a copy of the lithograph in the room below.

An old sandal-wood fan, closed, and tied with a pocket-handkerchief, was then given him, and he was asked if there was anything particular in it. After some time, he said there was a figure in the centre in black and white; it was in an old costume something like an Abbé, with hair curled up—costume about the time of Louis XV.—robe with a collar open at the neck. There were stars above it in the wood of the fan. It was then spread out; in the centre, in an oval,

was an engraved figure of Mirabeau, and the sandal-wood was pierced with stars. He said it belonged to a lady present, and he would, if required, point her out and give her the fan: this was not done. He was asked to describe the drawing-room of this lady, and said there was a small clock; but here is her own account: "I imagined that the ladies, whose crucifix and whose picture he had *seen* and described, had assisted him unintentionally by answering him, and thus giving him hints. I gave him none. We have on our drawing-room chimney-piece a remarkably small clock, placed upon a wooden pedestal covered with velvet. I asked Alexis concerning it; he said, it was an object which could be divided into two parts, the lower part of wood, and the upper part of steel, iron, or metal. He then said, '*Qu'il y avait une tête.*' I told him that there certainly was not, fancying he meant to describe a bronze bust. He said, '*Oui, oui—il y a une tête, il se peut que ce ne soit pas une tête d'homme, ni de femme; mais il y a une figure.*' I was as positive against the head as he was for it, so I said I would not tease him with any further questions, as I feared I might fatigue him. In talking matters over at home, we settled that his having placed '*une tête*' on our mantel-piece was an instance of failure. Imagine our *amazement!* in discovering engraven on the back of the clock—a Grinagog of a face!! which, though *ni une tête d'homme—ni une tête de femme*, is to all intents and purposes—*une Figure!*" Alexis fulfilled his promise of discovering the owner of the fan; when this lady allowed him to hold her hand, in order to make inquiries concerning the clock, he observed, unasked, that it was the lady to whom the fan belonged. She asked him if he recognized her by her voice; he told her "No," and she then remembered that she had not spoken to him previously.

A lady put her watch into his hands, asking him the name of the maker, which was engraven on the works in the usual manner: he made one or two attempts, but it was a total failure.

After this he begged to be unmesmerised or awakened, as he was very much fatigued: this was quite evident, for he seemed faint and exhausted. The persons present were quite satisfied with what he had done, and joined their requests to M. Marcillet to awaken him from a sleep, which, to all appearance, was not different from the waking state of all present, for he saw and conversed freely with every one. M. Marcillet, by some passes, jerking his arms, and making the joints of his fingers crack, awakened him, when he yawned and gave every indication of being awakened from a disturbed sleep.

The picture of Christ was shewn to him afterwards, but he did not seem to know anything about it; and on several questions being put with regard to things he had done in his state of somnambulism, he shewed complete ignorance, not seeming to know what had occurred, and this without betraying any appearance of attempting to conceal a previous knowledge, but asking, with natural curiosity and open manner, what he had done that was curious or astonishing. And truly much that he did was most curious and astonishing. How to be explained?

No one present at this interview could doubt the facts presented, though some among the party might say, we cannot understand—we are still incredulous? And they might ask, what is the cause?—what the power?—how can these things be? A French writer has it, "*On sait que dans l'esprit de la plupart des hommes, des choses, les plus réelles, passent pour de chimères, des qu'elles mortifient leur amour propre, ou qu'ils n'en connoissent pas les principes ni les causes.*" How many of the phenomena which are ever occurring around us, we cannot satisfactorily explain, and yet we dare not say we disbelieve in them. And in the case of clairvoyance, how many ask, is this a power of good or evil? forgetting that the same question can be put with regard to any power we possess. Others ask, are we all included with it? Probably it does exist, to a certain degree in all persons, being more developed in some, as in Alexis, than in others. It is only by the accumulation of facts that much which we require to satisfy ourselves can be learnt, but even then it may be said with Virgil, "*Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas.*"

VII. Surgical Operations in the Mesmeric state.

I. TO THE EDITOR OF THE ZOIST.

47, Prince George St., Portsea,
Dec. 6th, 1844.

Sir,—The following, though almost too insignificant for the pages of a public journal, may, when thrown into the scale, assist in establishing the truths of mesmerism.

On Saturday, Nov. 23, 1844, I, for the first time, mesmerised E. K., residing at Portsea. Whilst in this state, her mother expressed a wish for me to extract a splinter from

though only one out of many, I feel ought to be made known, occurring, as it does, in the centre of much medical scepticism; and I beg to refer any sceptics to Mr. Mosely, the dentist, of 28, Park Street, and to Miss Smith, of 29, Park Street, Bristol, both of whom witnessed this interesting operation. The members of the Provincial Medical Association will perhaps say this is only the effect of imagination. They shall have the full benefit of this opinion. My reply is, that if imagination will allow limbs to be amputated, teeth extracted, and tumors removed without pain, to say nothing of the most distressing nervous diseases cured, the sooner imagination is allowed to become an active agent of the curative art the better. To medical sceptics I would say, in the language of the late Mr. Chenevix on this subject, "Would it disgrace the greatest man whom England has ever produced to attempt an experiment or two upon a doctrine which Hufeland, Juissen, Cuvier, Ampère, and Laplace believed?" Nay, would it not disgrace him more to condemn, without knowing anything about what such men knew and believed? Surely, *what great men believe, ordinary men may try.*"

I remain, Sir,

Yours obediently,

27, Brook Street, Bath.

HENRY STORER, M.D.

XIII. *More of Alexis Didier.* By Dr. ELLIOTSON.

THE *Zoist* informed its readers last October, on the authority of M. Marcillet, that Alexis Didier would return to London in the spring. He did not return. I think that he acted very improperly in not fulfilling the promise; because, from his brain being overworked at clairvoyance by M. Marcillet, he had latterly failed very much, and his abrupt departure from London had given a shadow of probability to the bold and false assertion of Mr. Wakley, that his publication of what he vain-gloriously and puffingly termed Dr. Forbes's complete exposure of the youth had put him to flight. This was, however, a trifle compared with the diabolical falsehoods alleged by some medical men as the reason of his departure. It seems that Alexis had resolved to enter into a profession and no longer to exhibit his clairvoyance in public. This gave rise to other false reports:—that M. Marcillet was dead and that Alexis had confessed the whole to have been a cheat. Subsequently he relinquished his resolution, and has shewn his powers in public with M. Marcillet in several places. I will translate for your readers part of an article in the *Journal*

de Cherbourg of the 24th last July. After relating the production of sleep-waking, rigidity and relaxation, and the card-playing with the eyes bandaged and the cards reversed, the editor proceeds:—

“Alexis read fluently with his eyes still bandaged. A book was opened by chance, ‘Stop,’ said Alexis, ‘it is a Latin book.’ ‘You are wrong,’ was the reply. ‘I am certain of it,’ rejoined Alexis, and immediately he read a Latin line which was alone on the top of the page. His lucidity increased; his bandages were removed, and he read notwithstanding two hands and a handkerchief were placed over the page. I have seen him read with perfect accuracy a page, pointed out by one of the party, of an uncut book. A person went up to Alexis, ‘Can you tell me what I placed upon my chimney-piece before I left home?’ ‘Willingly: give me your hand. The object is not there generally; you took it from a shelf in the next room; it is very near the clock; it is black; there is something white that runs round it on the top; what can it be? stop: it is leather; shining; oh, what a fancy to put it upon a chimney-piece; it is a boot.’—This was true. A lady asked him what she had done in the course of the day, and what was her name. ‘You have received a letter from one of your friends who has three daughters, and it begins thus: My dear L.’—That was true. M. H. had concealed a word in his double watch case, ‘Will you tell me what it is?’ ‘I will. In the first place it is a name; it is composed of five letters.’ ‘True.’ ‘It is the name of one of your relations.’ ‘True also.’ ‘I will write it for you,’ and immediately he writes *les*; then he said, ‘I begin with the end, for the word is *Jules*,’ which it was. The watch had not been taken from the owner’s pocket. A lady goes up to him, ‘Be so good as to tell me my Christian name.’ Alexis takes her hand and instantly says, ‘*At—Ad—Adele*.’ The astonishment and admiration of all was extreme.

“A naval officer presents himself, ‘Tell me what you see in my cabin.’ After describing the furniture and the name of the ship, Alexis adds, ‘I see a frame with an engraving; it is a female; there is written below, *Angleterre*; the female has a butterfly upon her finger.’—The officer declared this was perfectly true. Alexis continued, ‘In such a year you were in a storm at sea; you were borne away by a wave and cast by it upon a heap of cordage; you were injured in the head and leg.’—The officer declared that all these particulars were exact.

“Miss P. asks, ‘Who am I thinking of at this moment?’ ‘One of your parents; your father; he is far away; in a

country beyond the sea; give me your hand, think attentively, and I will tell you the country; he is in England—in London.' 'Quite true.' 'Now I will tell you the street; it is near Regent Street, a little to the left and lower down.' Immediately he wrote with a pencil, *Leicester Street*. 'No,' replied the lady, 'it is Leicester Place, not Leicester Street.' The difference was trifling. He added 'Your father has had a fall, a severe fall, and injured chiefly his right leg. In fact the gentleman has been tossed by a bull and received a severe wound in his right leg.

"One of the company takes the hand of Alexis, 'Try and tell me what I have put on the chimney-piece of my room in the night.' 'I see it perfectly; it is a plant; it has three flowers like roses, but they are not roses; two are blown, the third is small and scarcely opened.' 'Perfectly true.' 'What do you see behind this flower?' 'A daguerreotyped portrait; it is your wife's; you have another of her in your bed-room, but not so good.' 'I have put several things on the top of my secretary and in one of the drawers. Do you see them?' 'Quite well. In the first place there is an engraving in a frame upon the top of the secretary: in the back ground are houses and small figures; in the fore ground a pillar; no, it is a crucifix; it is Christ on the cross; a woman is near him with dishevelled hair; one of the drawers is full of pence; in the other I see a box containing a chain and key.'—All this was correct.

"We should never finish if we were to attempt relating all the beautiful experiments, of which more than 400 persons were witnesses during eight days, and which proved the prodigious lucidity of Alexis. Thus he told one person what he had done at a particular time of the day; another what was the hour by his watch; another what was at the bottom of his pockets; another a remarkable circumstance that had happened to him, with the year, the day, and the hour.

"Such is a brief sketch of what we have seen and heard at these remarkable meetings, in the midst of the electric excitement and bravos of the assembly.

"When we hear for the first time of the extraordinary phenomena of mesmerism, we cannot help smiling with incredulity. When we are present at experiments of this nature and witness facts so astounding, our feeble reason still refuses to believe the supernatural things which pass before our eyes, and sometimes startle even those who show them. But belief takes the place of doubt, and we are compelled to yield to evidence when we have frequently witnessed the beautiful powers which Alexis possesses, or when turning ex-

perimenters ourselves, we obtain phenomena which prove our own power.

"To the conscientious observer who is anxious to investigate this subject and who perceives all the importance of mesmerism, these are not experiments of mere curiosity. It is a philosophical matter of vast extent, and of which no educated person has a right longer to remain ignorant. This science may, in many cases, aid the healing art, especially in the treatment of nervous affections; it displays to the physiologist new views of life, and throws a brilliant light upon psychology. In fact, somnambulic lucidity is but one of the truths of mesmerism; there are twenty others as interesting, and possibly more useful to study: a volume would be required to make them known.

"Allow me to express my regret at seeing so many respectable and well informed persons give themselves up to obstinately denying instead of studying a science which opens so vast a field for their reflections."

In Vol. II. of *The Zoist*, p. 482, after slightly mentioning a number of facts witnessed, and detailed to me from his notes, by Colonel Gurwood, proving beyond all doubt the extraordinary powers of Alexis, I stated that the Colonel had promised to give me a full account for publication, but afterwards excused himself. I consider him on every account very wrong: and am now enabled, notwithstanding the non-fulfilment of his promise, to furnish your readers, in a circuitous way, with his own account of the extraordinary revelations made to him by Alexis respecting some testimony of which he had long stood in need to do justice to himself. In the *Journal de Havre*, last August, 20th, is an extract from the *Journal Pandore*, containing an account by a gentleman of his journey in the Malle Poste from Bordeaux to Paris, accidentally with Colonel Gurwood, on the 24th of last November. After a time, the conversation turned upon mesmerism, in which the gentleman was a decided unbeliever, while Colonel Gurwood, who till two years ago had been a despising sceptic too, declared his firm conviction of its truth. A friend, he said, had with difficulty prevailed upon him at Paris to visit a sleep-waker and mesmeriser. I give you the rest of the account in the writer's words, translated in the *Cheltenham Free Press*, of September 6th.

"The mesmeriser was M. Marcillet, the patient, Alexis Didier.

"I shall pass over without notice a game of cards played between me and Alexis, and gained by him through his naming the cards, although I had myself attached a triple band-

age over his eyes. I shall not observe either upon the tetanic state of his legs, which were stiff and insensible, under the influence of the fluid. I hasten to come to the statement of facts personal to myself.

"After several experiments, I seated myself by the side of Alexis, my hand in his, and there we were chatting.

"*'My friend,'* said I to him, *'I am incredulous, but I am so with good faith; so do not fear on my part a systematic opposition.'*

"*'Oh! I know that well! you have too much good sense to deny evidence, and too much heart not to love those who love you—and I love you much myself, Englishman as you are; I love you because you generously saved the life of a Frenchman!'*

"*'Singularly struck by this remark, I begged him to continue.*

"*'Yes,'* continued Alexis, *it is a long time ago! 'It is,'* added he, after a pause, *'thirty years!'* The affair took place there away, in the south, during the winter. The country is wild. There, see, the night, and your troops, provided with scaling-ladders, appearing under the walls of a strong place. My God, what a noise! what a battle! Poor man, you were wounded,' said Alexis, placing his hand on my head; *'it was there that the blow fell—but your wound did not stop you. I see you farther on, mounting to the assault—on the breach. Stifled cries come to your ears: some English soldiers surround a Frenchman, whom they wish to kill. You run bravely. You lift up with your arms the weapons that menace his head, and you command them to respect his life. Oh! come, I love you, indeed. The officer follows you to a square tower, where several of his comrades are made prisoners. You traverse the town to find your general, to whom, by your orders, the French general surrenders his sword.'*

"*'And what became of this sword?'*

"*'Your general presented it to you—and you have it still in London, suspended to the wall of your room; the blade only is the same; the scabbard was changed in 1827.'*

"*'And does the officer, whose life I saved, still exist?'*

"*'Yes, he exists; and for a long time you have made useless researches to find him again. But have good hope, come again to-morrow, and we will discover him.'*

"*'Struck, affected by what I had just heard, I went out from M. Marcillet's with my head all on fire, not knowing what to think or believe; for, in fine, Alexis had said what was the truth.'*

"Yes, the 19th January, 1812, at the siege of *Ciudad Rodrigo*, in Spain, I was wounded in the head, and at the very place Alexis indicated.

"Yes, on the same night I had the happiness to save the life of a French officer.

"Yes, I received from Lord Wellington the sword of General Barrie, after the assault took place.

"Yes, the scabbard of this sword was changed about the epoch fixed by Alexis.

"Yes, I have been making researches to find again this French officer, saved by my care, because General Napier (in his *History of the Peninsular War*) refuses me the honour of having conducted the assault of *Ciudad Rodrigo*, and designates Major Machis as having the right to the sword which was given me by Lord Wellington. Judge, then, of what importance it was to me to find again a witness who could certify the truth of facts already thirty years old! Unfortunately, I had no longer, as to this officer, the least notion which might aid me in my researches.

"On the morrow I returned to Alexis, whom I pressed with questions touching the French officer.

" 'I avow,' the somnambulist replied to me, 'that I feel some embarrassment in following him in all the changes of his military career: he is found mixed up in my mind with other officers who were present, as he was at the siege of which I have spoken. Let us search well, however! Yes, I see our man, about eight years later—at Paris—Rue Saint Antoine—during the night. . . . There! they remit to him a despatch of great importance—and, with a company that he commands, as captain, he hastens to the Rue Richlieu, near the Royal Library, where I see a riotous crowd. Ah! there has just taken place a fatal event.'

" 'What has taken place, then?'

" 'A crime—an assassination—committed upon an illustrious personage.'

" 'Let us see, Alexis; follow the captain down to the present time, and tell me where I ought to seek for him.'

" 'It is in vain that I pursue him—my sight cannot attain to him. But, hark ye, address yourself to the colonel of the 42nd regiment of the line in garrison at Valenciennes. However, you need not hurry; for, if you write to him to-day, he will not receive your letter immediately; he is at Maubege.'

"Curious to verify these facts, I consulted *l'Annuaire*, and I addressed my letter to M. Husson, colonel of the 42nd of the line, in garrison at Valenciennes. Five days after, I

received from Colonel Husson a reply, in which he excused himself for his *delay, occasioned by his tour of inspection*. It was not him who was at the siege of *Ciudad Rodrigo*, but his brother, whose address he indicated at Paris.

"I wrote then, immediately to this brother, and here is the substance of his reply. After having confirmed his presence at the siege of *Ciudad Rodrigo*, M. Husson continues thus :—

" 'It was reported to me, and I heard several English officers say, during my stay at the general quarters, that an officer of the company of sharpshooters, charged with the defence of the small breach, was assailed and nearly overcome by some soldiers, when he uttered the *Mason's cry of distress*; an officer saved him and took the greatest care of him afterwards; he recommended him to his comrades on the route that the garrison followed, I believe, as far as Lisbon. It is without doubt you, Colonel, who, in the midst of a sharp action, saved the life of this officer, whose name I have never known.

(Signed) " 'HUSSON, Retired Colonel of Artillery.
" 'Paris, 17th January, 1843.'

"The same day I communicated this letter to Alexis.

" 'Courage,' said he to me, 'we are in the right road. On your return to London consult the documents relative to the months of January and February, 1812, and I answer for your success.'

"A month later, I was in the Tower of London, hunting among the papers of Lord Wellington all the documents relative to the affairs of Spain of the above epoch. All of a sudden my eyes fell upon an indorsement thus worded :—

" 'BONFILH, 34th light.'

"This name struck me like a ray of light, and I felt myself seized with an inexplicable conviction; I opened the letter, exclaiming, "Without doubt it is him!"

"By this letter, signed 'Bonfilh,' a French officer asked Lord Wellington to send his letters to the advanced posts.

"There was nothing in that which served to fix me; nevertheless, urged by an internal voice, I wrote to Colonel d'Artois, secretary to the committee of fortifications at Paris, begging him to make researches in the War-office.

"Colonel d'Artois replied that there existed no person of the name of Bonfilh on the army-list; but he sent me a certificate proving that the Commandant Bonfilh, who served in the 34th light, received his half-pay at Villeneuve-d'Agen, and lived at Villareal (Lot et Garonne).

"The 23rd of April, 1844, I addressed a letter to the Commandant Bonfilh, in which I made known to him my re-

searches and my hopes, and on the 7th May following I received the following reply :—

“ ‘Villareal (Lot et Garonne), 1st May, 1844.

“ ‘To Colonel Gurwood.

“ ‘Sir,—I received from you a letter, dated the 23rd April, in which I read with the warmest interest the details on the taking of Ciudad Rodrigo.

“ ‘After the recitals you have made, Colonel, there is no doubt that I am the French officer whose life you so nobly saved, and for whom you have so long time sought.

“ ‘I recollect that when you arrived to my aid, I was down on the ground, surrounded by six or eight English soldiers, some of whom held their bayonets to my body, while others were tearing open my clothes and taking my money away. You ran to me, Colonel, and making the soldiers retire, you took me under your protection. We went to the square tower, near the gate of Almeida, where General Barrie surrendered to you, saying, “Respect my soldiers.” This General offered you his watch; but you replied, “Preserve your watch, General: honour brings me here, and not pillage.” He wished also to give up his sword to you, and you refused it, saying, “You will remit it to General the Duke of Wellington.”

“ ‘I shall add, Colonel, that when they were conducting us prisoners towards Portugal, you made me enter a house in a little village, *El Codon*, where there was given me a cup of rum, and a ration loaf, for the route. In fine, you had the goodness to accompany me as far as the column of prisoners, which was in advance; and without you, Colonel, the Spaniards would infallibly have cut my throat before I could have joined my comrades in misfortune.

“ ‘I have often reproached myself, Colonel, for not having asked the name of my benefactor: but for which, believe me truly, I should have taken the advance in writing and testifying my lively and eternal gratitude. In fine, I pray continually for your happiness; and beg of you to sacrifice a moment of your leisure to write to me.

“ ‘Him who owes life to you,

(Signed) “ ‘*BONFILH, Chief of Battalion on Half-pay,*
“ ‘*Officer of the Legion of Honour.*’

“ ‘At length, I received the price of my labours! The letter of this brave commandant rendered me so happy, that I promised myself to go and see him on my first journey to France; and you see me, young man, returning from Villareal, where I have passed some days that I reckon among the number of my most fortunate. Oh! that you had been present at our mutual recognition! You would have taken a lively part in the joy of all that family, whose benedictions I bring away! With what charming recollections M. Bonfilh entertained me of the events of his life, entirely conformable, by the bye, with the narration of Alexis. Thus, for example,

on the 13th of February, 1820, M. Bonfilh, captain of the 47th of the line, in garrison at Paris, was going the rounds in the evening, in the Rue Saint Antoine, when they informed him of the assassination of the Duke de Berri. Immediately he repaired, with his troops, to the Rue Richlieu, and passed the night at the post of the Royal Library."

"Colonel, I am confounded. Mesmerism plays so great a part in the recital that I have just heard, that you have almost converted me: and, hence, on my arrival at Paris, my first visit shall be to M. Marcillet."

My amiable companion stopped at Orleans, where he was to remain; and I arrived alone at Paris, about seven o'clock in the morning. At two o'clock in the afternoon, the same day, I knocked at the door at M. Marcillet's, where, by a lucky chance, Alexis was sleeping, giving a *séance*.

The master of the house gave me a reception full of kindness, and consented to place me *en rapport* with the somnambulist.

Then, addressing myself to Alexis,—

"My dear Sir," said I, "could you divine who I am?"

These were his first words:—

"You are a friend of Colonel Gurwood's!"

* * * * *

J. S. DE GOSSE."

The account given in Vol. II., p. 292, of Colonel Gurwood's interview with Alexis at my house, last year in June, a month after he had received Commandant Bonfilh's letter, may be looked at as well as p. 482.

ERRATUM.

In Vol. III., No. 10, p. 153, in Mr. Noel's paper, for "lunatic views," read somatic views.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

Kosmos. Parts II., III., and IV.

A Plea for Phonotypy and Photography; or, Speech Printing and Speech Writing. By Alexander John Ellis, B.A., Fellow of the Cambridge Philosophical Society, and formerly Scholar of Trinity College, Cambridge; Honourary Member of the Photographic Corresponding Society; Author of the Alphabet of Nature, &c. 1845.

A Manual of Phonography or Writing by Sound; a natural method of writing by signs that represent the sounds of language, and adapted to the English language as a complete system of Phonatic Short-hand. By Isaac Pitman. 7th Edition. 1845.

The Phonographic Class Book. By Isaac Pitman. 1845.

The "Fonographic Correspondent." Conducted by I. Pitman, Fonographic Institution, Bath. No. 18. June, 1845.

The Phonotypic Journal. Nos. 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43.

IV. *Rheumatic Fever.*

Mr. W. Brow, Tailor, Skelton, about two months ago was relieved of a severe attack of rheumatic fever by mesmerism. All pain was *immediately* removed, and in *four or five days* the patient was well.

V. *Congestion of the Lungs, Sickness, and Low Fever.*

A little girl, three years of age, the daughter of my steward, had an attack of congestion of the lungs. She had been under the medical treatment of Mr. Palmer of York, and had been ill for some time; her pulse was quick and feeble, her breathing was laborious, and she complained of pain in the chest; the medicines prescribed had not relieved her, and the child was fast losing its strength. By mesmerising the chest for about one hour and a half, the breathing was relieved, and the pulse much improved, the child sleeping quietly during the process. In two or three days the child had got rid of these symptoms. I left home about this time for a fortnight, and on my return I found the poor little creature had relapsed into a sort of low fever, with most distressing sickness, which nothing seemed to alleviate, every thing she took, either of food or medicine, being instantly rejected from her stomach. Mr. Allen, of York, had been called in, and recommended her spine to be rubbed with croton oil. I returned home just as they were about to apply it. I requested to be allowed to try mesmerism first; and in less than an hour she was enabled to drink a cup of milk, which was not rejected from her stomach; she had little or no return of sickness, and recovered her strength and health in an almost incredible manner in a few days.

H. S. THOMPSON.

X. *Clairvoyance of Alexis Didier.* By Dr. ELLIOTSON.

In the 8th and 11th numbers of *The Zoist* such examples of the clairvoyance of Alexis Didier were given as compelled me, with all my prejudices, to be satisfied of his possessing this faculty at times.

I received the following account from M. Marcillet.—

“On May 17, 1847, Alexis and myself went to the apartments of Lord Frederick Fitzclarence, at the hotel Brighton, Rue Rivoli, and the trials of Alexis’s clairvoyance were begun in the presence of Lord Normanby, the English ambassador, who, like Lord Frederick, had no belief in mesmerism.

“‘Can you describe my country house in England?’ said the ambassador to Alexis, who had been sent into sleep-waking. After reflecting a few minutes, Alexis replied, that it was on a height. Then, having detailed its situation and all the particulars of the grounds, he accurately described the furniture of the house, and finished by saying, that certain windows looked out upon the sea. So unexpected a description astonished the ambassador.

“A young and handsome lady, encouraged by the lucidity of Alexis, put some questions to him. He told her her name and her rank; ‘you are a *dame d’honneur* of Queen Victoria,’ added he; and it was true.

“Lord Normanby took up one of Lord Frederick’s books, and, having stated the number of a page, Alexis read a sentence in it, though the book was not out of Lord Normanby’s hands. This experiment was repeated several times and always with the same success.

“Lord Frederick had, up to this moment, been a mere spectator: but now broke silence, took the hand of Alexis, and, with his characteristic kindness of manner, asked the following question,—

“‘Can you tell me how I was employed the day before yesterday with that gentleman?’ pointing to one of the company.

“‘I see you both,’ replied Alexis, ‘going to the Rue Lazare in a carriage: there you take the train and travel to Versailles; you then get into another carriage, which conveys you to St. Cyr. You visit the military school, and it was the other gentleman who proposed this excursion, he having been educated there.’

“‘All this is admirable, Alexis,’ exclaimed his lordship. ‘Go on, Alexis.’

“‘You return to Versailles; I see you both enter a pastry-cook’s. Your companion eats three little cakes: you take something else.’

“Lord Frederick, perfectly astonished, said, before Alexis had time to think, ‘You are right; I ate a small piece of bread.’

“‘You next take the train again and return to Paris. However, let us thoroughly understand each other. You started by the railroad on the right bank, but you returned by that on the left.’

“The latter circumstance astonished his lordship so much, that he not only congratulated us before the whole party, but offered us his high patronage on every occasion.”

Soon after M. Marcillet had sent me word of these wonders, a friend of mine—Mr. Bushe, son of the late Chief Justice of Ireland, and intimate with Lord Frederick, called upon me, and offered to apply to his lordship respecting the truth. His lordship immediately desired his secretary to write me word that he was at that moment too busy to write to me himself, but that, if I would procure a detailed account, he would peruse it, and, if he found it accurate, certify to its truth. I applied repeatedly to M. Marcillet, who is the most unmethodical and dilatory man in the world, and it was but lately that I procured from him the statement which I have translated. I transmitted the original to Lord Frederick by means of our common friend, and the following was his Lordship's answer,—

“Portsmouth, Nov. 15, 1848.

“My dear Bushe,—I have read the statement you sent me relative to the séance that was held at my apartments when in Paris, in 1847, in mesmerism. It is quite correct in every particular; indeed nothing could be much more extraordinary than the whole thing was in every respect.

“I hope I shall see Dr. Elliotson here, as he is a great friend of our first physician here—Dr. Engledue, whose acquaintance I have lately had the good fortune to make. Come down, my dear Bushe, and see your old friend,

“FRED. FITZCLARENCE.

“I return the letter.”

I have had no means of verifying the following account, which was sent me at the time of the occurrence. But the substantiation of M. Marcillet's perfect accuracy by Lord Frederick, in reference to the one, removes all doubt from my mind respecting the other.

“Alexis is more brilliant than ever. The saloons of the aristocracy are eagerly opened to us. The following facts of the lucidity of Alexis have done this. I have a séance with Alexis at my house every Saturday evening, at eight o'clock. Last Saturday week my party was very select. A lady presented her closed hand to Alexis, and begged him to tell her what was in it. ‘It is hair in a paper.’ ‘True.’ ‘The hairs are light: they belonged to a great personage who is abroad; he limps a little; they are the hairs of the Duc de Bordeaux.’ The lady, astonished at the answer, said before the whole party that she was Madame de Quéney, first *dame d'honneur* of the Duchesse de Berry.

“Last Wednesday, the 24th instant, your ambassador, Lord Normanby, desired to see us a second time, and was

again astonished. 'In this box,' said he to Alexis, 'I have placed something, can you tell me what it is?' 'It is a bracelet with a portrait; the likeness is of Queen Victoria!!!' 'That is astounding: you lately described my English country house to me; I have another, can you see it?' 'Perfectly well. It is not in England. It is in a warmer climate. I will stand at the window. I see a great city situated a league off; a little river flows near your garden. The city that I see is Florence! You have lived in this city also, for I see your house also; it is in the *Place* opposite a large church. You had, likewise, a terrace. You had your portrait taken in this city.' 'Yes.' 'This portrait is placed in the saloon of your country house!' 'This is overpowering,' said the ambassador.

"Last Monday, we were at the house of the Comtesse de Paris. A person asked Alexis what was in a parcel tied with string that he held in his hand. 'It is a letter without signature, and bears the date of 1809: he who wrote it was assassinated ten years afterwards; it is the Duc de Berry.' The person who asked the question was the Comte de la Ferronnais.

"Yours faithfully,

"MARCILLET.

"May 31, 1847,

"Paris, 48, Rue de la Victorie."

BOOKS RECEIVED.

The Journal of Psychological Medicine and Mental Pathology. Edited by Forbes Winslow, M.D. No. IV., Oct. 1, 1848.

Ethnological Journal, October, November, December.

Popular Theology tested by Modern Science, in a series of letters to a friend, by a Well-wisher to Society. London: John Chapman, 142, Strand. 1848.

This *little* book contains reflections calculated to make *large* brains think. The "Well-wisher to Society" has clearly expressed thoughts which must be presented to all those who reflect on theological subjects. Many of the thoughts bear the impress of originality, and we would willingly extract a few specimens if our pages were open to the discussion of such topics. We fully expect to hear that this unpretending volume has received a large circulation.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We regret being obliged to postpone to our next number the interesting papers by Mr. Roffe, Non Wist, Mr. Jaffray, Mr. H. S. Thompson, Mr. Barth, Dr. Elliotson, Dr. Storer, the late Capt. Bagnold, accounts of several painless extractions of teeth, and others—some of which have been already announced.

Non Wist's former communications are all carefully preserved, and not yet made use of because we have not seen our way into the subject.

Mr. Pasley has written to us in answer to our remarks upon his pamphlet. But we must decline entering upon the argument, as it relates rather to philosophy in general, than to our own department: all we have to observe in reply is, that, in our notice, we *did not* express either "surprise or alarm at the philosophy of the sages of antiquity being disputed," neither did we "think that time and consent make old practice unquestionable:" we said and say nothing of the kind; on the contrary, our motto always is, "This is truth, though *opposed* to the philosophy of ages." But, in the pursuit of that truth, we implied our love of facts over an indulgence in hypothesis; and while we smiled at the boldness, not to say rashness and positiveness, with which the author pronounced upon what he here calls the "fall of the sciences," and the success of his own theory, *i.e.* the fall of Newton, and of Bacon, and of Priestley, &c., and the success consequently of himself,—we still gave him a welcome into the field of investigation, and admitting the ingenuity of his views and the ability with which he maintained them, we simply called for further proofs, and recommended more hesitation and self-distrust, an advice, we regret to observe, which has been received with a sensitiveness that was scarcely needful.

London Medical Gazette.—The paragraph alluded to at p. 403, is the following:—"It is with surprise and regret we learn that Dr. Elliotson has been appointed to deliver the Harveian Oration at the Royal College of Physicians on the 27th inst. Considering the notoriety which the orator elect has acquired as a patron of mesmerism, we should have supposed that a more appropriate selection might have been made. We cannot bring ourselves to believe that the majority of the Fellows concur in the step which has been taken by the College, and we feel confident that it will create great dissatisfaction in the profession."

Mr. Wakley.—The publication of the cure of the cancer seems to have had as violent an effect upon Mr. Wakley as the delivery of Dr. Elliotson's Harveian Oration. We fear his frame will hardly stand many such shocks. He thus writes:

"*An old Friend.*—The pretended cure of a cancer by mesmerism, as announced in a pamphlet, is one of the *grossest puffs* we have ever seen. It cannot deceive any medical practitioner who is acquainted with his profession. It appears that the treatment commenced in 1843, and the tumor did not disappear until 1848. *Hundreds*, and even *thousands*, of similar tumors, supposed to have been cancers, disappear from the breasts of females in half those years, and under every variety of treatment that can be named. Under the system of pressure, as practised by the late Mr. Young, tumors of double the size were completely absorbed in less than six months; some in two or three months. Mr. Young published scores of such cases, and the attestations to his accuracy were respectable and conclusive. Many tumors, apparently of a true scirrhus nature, have been promptly absorbed under the admirable system of pressure first adopted and recommended by Dr. Neil Arnott. In a few weeks beneficial effects have been produced, the patients have been relieved, both from their sufferings and their swellings. It is time that the obscenities of mesmerism should engage the attention of the heads of families, and all persons who uphold the character of English society for its purity and morality. The statements which are occasionally sent to us are descriptive of scenes which are highly disgusting. Why do not its

unknown qualities which, like the letters *x* and *y* of the algebraists, we employ in physics and metaphysics to work out our problems, which too often end in the production of a *surd* or *impossible* root, leaving us as wise as to the real nature of the cause as when we began. The passions of rage and despair, we know, can endow an individual with abnormal strength; but in the instances above referred to no extraordinary excitement appears to be called into play. In maniacs too we read of feats of extraordinary strength. In the *Phrenological Journal* some years ago there was an extract from some foreign journal, containing the case of an individual who could not be restrained by the combined power of several men, but whose superhuman strength failed him, whenever he fell on a pavement of asphalte,—the reverse of the giant Antæus with whom Hercules had to contend. To conclude in the words of Sir David Brewster as quoted in the note, "The subject merits a careful investigation."

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

NON-WIST.

Edinburgh, 7th June, 1850.

P.S. With reference to some notices of Swedenborg in *The Zoist*, allow me to call your attention to a very able article on the character and writings of that extraordinary man in the *Prospective Review* for last month.

X. *Recent Clairvoyance of Alexis Didier.* By the Rev. CHAUNCEY HARE TOWNSEND, London and Lausanne. Communicated by Dr. Elliotson.

"And if any one advances anything new which contradicts, perhaps threatens to overturn, the creed which we had for years repeated; and have handed down to others, all passions are raised against him, and every effort is made to crush him. People resist with all their might; they act as if they neither heard nor could comprehend; they speak of the new view with contempt, as if it were not worth the trouble of even so much as an investigation or a regard; and thus a new truth may wait a long time before it can make its way."—*Conversations of Goëthe*, vol. i., p. 108.

Mon Loisir, Lausanne, 25th Nov., 1851.

My dear Elliotson,—I thought you might like the accompanying account for *The Zoist*. If so, it is heartily at your service. I thought I ought to have the moral courage to stand up for Alexis, whom some think a humbug, and to tell the truth, let persons think of it what they will.*

* The examples of Alexis Didier's clairvoyance published in *The Zoist* are overwhelming. See Nos. VI., VIII., XXIV., XXXV. Like other true clairvoyants he has sometimes been at fault: but like other clairvoyants he has often

I have rather under-stated than over-stated the matter; because about myself and the lady mentioned, I could not state one half the wonderful things he said.

Ever, my dear Elliotson,

Very faithfully yours,

C. HARE TOWNSHEND.

In passing through Paris I saw Alexis last month, and the results of the interview were so extraordinary that I think myself bound to communicate them to you.

First: As there are such different opinions about the clairvoyance of Alexis, and as many represent him as a mere sham, I went rather prepossessed against him than otherwise.

Secondly: I took every precaution not to be known to him in such a way as might account for any revelations he might make.

I was only to stay in Paris one whole day, and late in the evening of that day (about six o'clock) I went to the house of M. Marcillet, the mesmeriser of Alexis, whose address I procured (remark) only through a sort of Parisian blue-book, which I got leave to look at in a shop.

M. Marcillet was not at home when I arrived at his door, but was expected back soon to dinner.

I waited for him in his agreeable apartments, and soon he came in, accompanied by an extremely pretty girl—his daughter—whom I immediately recognized as the original of a fine portrait that hung upon the wall.

I merely introduced myself as a friend of Dr. Elliotson, which indeed seemed quite sufficient passport, and gave my name, saying I lived at Lausanne, whither I was proceeding.

M. Marcillet, seeming to speak very little English, conversed with me in French, and I found, incidentally, he was quite ignorant I had written a work on mesmerism. In short, I feel convinced there was no clue to any particular knowledge about me. And you know I was not in London when M. Marcillet and Alexis were there, and that I only recently occupy my present residence in town. I found M. Marcillet more desirous to talk than to enquire, and full of enthusiasm about mesmerism. He told me some interesting anecdotes regarding his mesmeric power—of his having restored to consciousness persons who had, in the streets of Paris, dropped

been treated most unfairly by sceptics, especially by those of the medical profession.

In No. XXXV., p. 234, will be found a list of all the instances recorded in *The Zoist* of clairvoyance, cerebral sympathy, and the power of the silent will.—J. ELLIOTSON.

down in apoplectic fits, and he shewed me, recorded in a newspaper of a few days back, a case of the kind.

I must say that M. Marcillet made a favourable impression upon me.

I now spoke of Alexis, and expressed a wish to see him in the mesmeric state.

M. Marcillet told me that he was going to give a *séance*, with Alexis, at 10 o'clock the following day.

"But," said I, "I shall by that time have quitted Paris. I leave by the seven o'clock morning train for Dijon. What is to be done?"

"Why," (replied M. Marcillet,) "Alexis lives three miles from me, out by Montmartre, and he will very probably be at some theatre before I can send to him (as he is very fond of theatrical amusements); but I will do what I can to bring him to you at your hotel before nine o'clock this evening. If we are not with you by nine, do not expect us. Where do you lodge?"

I told M. Marcillet that I was staying at the *Hôtel Wagram, Rue Rivoli, au sixième*; for, having arrived late in Paris the preceding evening, I had great difficulty in finding any lodging at all. "I hope," said I, "you will not mind coming up my break-neck staircase. It is too bad to give you all this trouble."

"Oh," replied M. Marcillet, "*nous sommes très habitués à cela à Paris, nous autres Parisiens!*" So, on this agreement, I took leave. Seated in my aerial domicile, which seemed to command all Paris in the shape of infinite chimneys, I awaited the hoped-for, but hardly expected, visit. Eight o'clock struck—half-past eight.

Slow and wary steps were heard mounting the stairs.

The door opened.

Enter M. Marcillet, followed by a young man of (in appearance) some six or seven and twenty years old, of middling stature and pleasing countenance.

"*Voici ce grand gaillard!*" said M. Marcillet, "I just caught him in time, and here he is! And now, to lose no time, *commençons*. You shall mesmerise Alexis yourself, for I think it will please you so to do."

Accordingly, M. Marcillet, taking Alexis by the shoulders, squeezed him down into an arm-chair, and I seated myself opposite to him, took his hands, and began to mesmerise. After I had made passes for two or three minutes, the face of Alexis began to be strangely convulsed in a manner I had never seen in any other patient. The truth is, he made very ugly faces indeed, but this kind of spasm lasted but for a

short time. Suddenly his whole countenance grew calm, and he fell back in a passive state, with a deep sigh, and murmuring, "*Merci !*"

"*Maintenant il en a eu assez !*" said M. Marcillet; "he always says, '*Merci !*' when he is mesmerised enough."

I now asked Alexis the usual question, "*Dormez vous bien ?*" to which he replied, "*Très bien !*"

"And now," said M. Marcillet, "*Je ne veux pas vous gêner*. I am going to take a turn for half an hour, and shall leave you to ask Alexis what questions you please. So good bye for the present."

I was not sorry for this. "Now," thought I, "there can be no collusion at least."

As soon as M. Marcillet was gone, I began to test the clairvoyance of Alexis, in the matter of seeing distant places.

I asked him if he would visit my house (in thought).

He immediately asked, "Which? for you have two! You have a house in London and one in the country. Which shall I go to first?"

I said, "To the house in the country."

After a pause, Alexis said, "*J'y suis !*" and then, to my surprise, he opened wide both his eyes, and stared about him. I saw, however, at once, that he had the fixed rigid gaze of a sleep-waker. As far as I could perceive, he never once altered the fixed position of the lids during the whole time that he was in distant clairvoyance. The pupil looked dilated, dull, and without any movement of conscious activity.

"Well," I asked, "what do you see?"

"*Je vois,*" said he, "*une maison d'un moyen apparence. C'est une maison, pas un château. Il y a un jardin autour. A côté gauche il y a une maison, plus petite, sur la propriété.*"

All this was said in breaths, with some effort, and with a hurried gasp, as it were, between each sentence.

I own I was surprised at the accuracy of the description of my house near Lausanne, particularly at the mention of *the small house on the left-hand side*, where, according to Swiss custom, dwells my landlady. It was, in fact, a marking feature of the place, not to be guessed at by a stranger, and, as such, brought much conviction to my mind.

"Now," said I to Alexis, "what sort of view do you see?"

"*De l'eau, de l'eau !*" said he hurriedly, as if he saw the lake which indeed spreads out before my windows. Then, "*Il y a des arbres en face tout près de la maison*" (all true).

"Well, now," I said, "we will go into the drawing-room (*salon*). What do you see?"

He looked about, and said, (where my memory fails as to

the exact words, I give the sense in English,) "You have a good many pictures on the walls. But now, this is curious—they are all modern, *except two*."

"And those two," said I; "can you see the subjects?"

"Oh, yes! One is a sea-piece: the other—is *un sujet religieux*."

I really felt something of a shudder at this extreme precision. How then was I astonished when Alexis went on to describe minutely the *sujet religieux*, which was a picture I had lately bought of an Italian refugee, and which had many striking peculiarities.

He said at once, "There are three figures in the picture—an old man, a woman, and a child. Can the woman be the Virgin? (he asked of himself musingly.) No! she is too old! (proceeded he, answering his own question, while I remained perfectly silent.) The woman has a book upon her lap, and the child *points with its finger to something in the book! There is a distaff in the corner.*"

Effectively, the picture represented St. Ann teaching the Virgin to read, and every particular respecting it was correct.

I asked, "On what is the picture painted?"

Alexis answered, "It is neither on canvass, nor copper (metal). It is on a curious substance."

After some consideration, he began to rap on the table with his knuckles, as if trying to ascertain the nature of the substance. Then he called out, "*C'est sur pierre.*" (The picture is in fact on black marble.) "Now," said he, "I am looking at it behind. It is of a curious colour *entre noirâtre et gris* (the exact colour it is, behind). *It is also rough behind. Et tiens,*" added he, "*c'est bombé.*"

This last peculiarity would have convinced the most incredulous. The picture, from a warp or curve in the stone, had been very difficult to frame.

Alexis now described many minute particulars of my house in Norfolk Street. He gave an exact description of the two women-servants—one old, one young. (He said that in neither of my abodes were any but servants—quite true.) He seemed pleased to describe the young one minutely, whom he thought pretty. He made no single mistake as to the colour of eyes, or hair, &c.

He told me my house had a park before it—"Not your park," said he smiling.

He said, when I asked him if there was anything "*remarquable*" in the style of furnishing?

"*Remarquable, si vous voulez. Mais on le voit assez souvent. C'est style Louis Quatorze.*"

He described the book-room next to the drawing-room. He told me the windows of the saloon were bow-windows, and he described accurately the frame of a looking-glass carved by Grinling Gibbons over the chimney-piece. "*La glace*," said he, "*est petite en comparaison de la bordure. Il y a des fleurs, des fruits, toute sorte de choses, sculptés.*" Then suddenly he said, "I see a picture reflected in the mirror" (most true). I asked him to describe it.

He did not begin, this time, by naming the subject, but he seemed struck, at first, with the female figure of the piece.

"*Elle a*," said he, "*un corsage rouge, draperie noire, ou plutôt brune foncée.*"

So went he on to describe the two children, and then suddenly he said,

"*C'est aussi un sujet religieux—une sainte famille !*"

I asked the name of the painter. He seemed puzzled at first. He said, "*Il est mort depuis long tems !*"

At last he murmured out, in a very cavernous voice, "*Raffaelle !*" and sunk back in his chair as if exhausted by some effort. The fact is, the name of Raphael is written dimly in golden letters on the hem of the Virgin's garment. Alexis then described the pictures on either side of the Holy Family. "*There is only one on each side*," said he. "That on the right is a sea-piece—a storm."

About the left-hand picture he was longer. He, at first, merely described it as "*un interieur.*" But, on being pressed, he gave the minutest possible description of a Morland which I have hanging up there.

The inside of the stable—the man with a wheelbarrow—and the grey horse lying down, were all accurately noted. He seemed to pity the horse, and added the last astounding touch to his description by saying, "*Pauvre bête ! Il a des blessures sur les flancs !*"

Alexis seemed now rather fatigued. I made a few passes to relieve him, and then proceeded to test his power of reading through obstacles.

I brought out of the next room Lamartine's *Jocelyn*, which I had that day bought. I opened it, and Alexis read some lines with closed eyes. (Directly the distant clairvoyance was over, he shut his eyes.) Then suddenly he said, "How many leaves off would you wish me to read?" I said, "Eight." (I had heard of this faculty, but never witnessed it.) He then traced with his finger slowly along the page that was open, and read,—

"A dévoré d'un jet toute ma sympathie."

I counted down eight leaves from the leaf first opened, and found, exactly under where his finger had traced, the line he had read, *correct*, with the exception of a single word. He had said *déchiré* instead of *dévoré*.

Human incredulity began to stir in me, and I really thought perhaps Alexis knew *Jocelyn* by heart. So I again went to a drawer in the next room, and brought out a large book I had also bought that day—a sort of *magazin pittoresque*, called *Les beaux Arts*. This, at least, Alexis could not know by heart. Again, the same wonder was performed. I have forgotten the exact place, which I omitted to mark as I did in *Jocelyn* (in which the pieces of paper I put to specify the marvel still remain), but I certify that Alexis read in *Les beaux Arts*, also, several words many pages below the page he had open before him. Still, to make all sure, I brought forth an English book, *The Inheritance*, Miss Ferrier's clever novel of years ago, and in this he read the name of *Gertrude*, and other words at the distance of many leaves. With regard to all the books, they were never opened but once, and kept open at the place first opened, and Alexis never touched the leaves, or could, by possibility, have caught a *visual* glance of what was below the page he was looking on. (And all with closed eyes, remember.)

I now brought out, by Alexis's own request, a letter which I had received from a lady rather lately.

He said, "*Avez-vous une lettre d'une personne pour laquelle vous êtes intéressé? Je vous dirai quelquechose là dessus.*"

The letter was enclosed in a perfectly opaque envelope, which Alexis (and I carefully watched him) never attempted to disturb. He held it quietly in his hand.

The first thing he exclaimed was, "Why, here is a bit of newspaper (*d'un vieux journal*) in the letter."

I had forgotten the circumstance, but, on consideration, remembered *there was*.

"I see," said Alexis, "the words 'brotherhood of nations' (he said, *brudderhood*) printed on the paper."

It was in fact really so, being something about the Peace Society, that Mrs. T. had cut out and sent me.

Then said Alexis, "This lady lives in Suffolk, and at *so and so Place*."

He began to write with a pencil I gave him the name of the place, outside the letter, *quite correctly*.

I found, on subsequent inspection, the address, so and so *Lodge*,—Suffolk, written on the letter.

But now—marvel of marvels!—Alexis told me the whole history of my fair correspondent—how long I had known

her, and many minute circumstances respecting herself and our acquaintance—something too about the character of her sister, and (to crown all) he wrote (still on the outside the letter) both the Christian and family name of her father! I will shew you, my dear Elliotson, the letter and the writing on it, when we meet; but, of course, I do not wish to make the lady's name public, nor can I further particularize the very remarkable things that Alexis said respecting her and her family.

M. Marcillet now returned from his walk, and, seeing me still engaged in asking Alexis questions, would have again retired, but I made him come in, having established enough, during his absence, to put away all idea of complicity.

I now asked Alexis some questions about myself, my avocations, subjects of interest, and finally health—all of which he answered as if he had known me all my life.

He spoke on very deep and serious subjects, and Alexis shewed a pleasing and religious turn of mind. Partly misunderstanding a question of mine, he assured me he knew nothing of the state of the soul after death. "*Dieu seul le sait*," said he. "It is true," he continued, "many somnambulists pretend to make revelations about a future state. But the proof they are all wrong is, that no two of them agree: all give different accounts."

As to the state of my health, no medical man could be more precise, and he described my temperament, &c., *almost in the very words* of such medical attendants as have had my confidence.

In giving this account, I by no means intend to say that Alexis spoke all the recorded things without hesitation, or in a manner different from the ordinary one of sleep-waking, which is invariably full of effort and excitement. Once or twice he made mistakes. Sometimes he asked me to concentrate my attention strongly on what I wished him to see. I believe, and M. Marcillet said, that a great part of his success came from my patient manner, and from his feeling at ease with me. I have no doubt, had I been impatient, suspicious, ready to take up every little error, Alexis would have lost his clairvoyance, and perhaps attempted to supply it by guessing.

This is the history of most of the mistakes and apparent want of truth of somnambulists. We have no patience with them, and will not *observe the conditions* requisite for the development of their clairvoyance.

But a thousand negations are nothing before *one* affirmative proof, and, had Alexis even been otherwise wrong

throughout, yet have described my picture at Lausanne, and told me the name of Mrs. T.'s father merely by reading it in my thoughts, I should have thought nothing of the failures, everything of the success. So however will not the world, who insist on having all right, or nothing.

Alexis awoke with the same convulsive movements and ugly faces with which he went to sleep. In a moment he arose, no longer the free and easy somnambulist, but a shy respectful young man.

It was past 10 o'clock, and in a few minutes M. Marcillet and he were gone, leaving me to muse, as much I might, on the events of the evening.

NOTE BY DR. ELLIOTSON.

A friend several months ago gave me a short account, which he had printed for private distribution, of some proofs of the clairvoyance of Alexis. As I was more anxious for the public to feel an interest in the medical powers of mesmerism than in its highest wonders, which are most calculated for the studious and philosophical, I put it aside; but, on receiving Mr. Townshend's communication, sent it to a friend in Paris, and begged him to ascertain its correctness from M. Marcillet. The following is the account, and to it I have subjoined the answer from my friend, Dr. Davison:—

" Clairvoyance of Alexis.

"About eight days before the election, General Cavaignac went incog. to consult Alexis, as to whether Louis Napoleon or General Cavaignac would be President: to which Alexis replied 'It will not be you.' 'I don't speak of myself. I speak of Louis Napoleon and General Cavaignac.' 'I understand,' rejoined Alexis. 'It will not be you.' On which the General went away disconcerted.

"Mon. Sabine, Chief of the Station of the Havre Railroad, went a few days ago to consult Alexis, who, when in somnambulism, said, 'You come about something lost in the service to which you belong.' 'It is true,' replied he. 'You are employed on the Havre Railroad?' 'It is likewise true. (Mon. Sabine not having previously stated his business to any one.) 'It is a basket that is missing, containing some little animals. They are—they are—leeches. You sent to enquire about the basket at Rouen and at Havre, and you have received no news of it. This is what has taken place. A traveller going to Havre by your carriages on the—the—the 11th November, was greatly annoyed, on arriving at his destination, to find only one basket

instead of two, which he had on setting off.' 'This is wonderful!' said Mon. Sabine. 'There were two baskets of leeches.' 'The train (continued Alexis), on arriving at Rouen, left several travellers with their luggage, and one of the baskets was put, by mistake, on one of the omnibuses going into the town, and the conductor was surprised to find that no one claimed it. From fear of being scolded he did not deposit it in the baggage warehouse, but hid it for some days in his stable; and while it was there you wrote to Rouen and Havre about it, the reply being that it could not be found. A few days ago the conductor put it in the goods dépôt, near the entrance and beneath the first window on the right. You will find it if you set off to Rouen; only, on account of the length of time that has elapsed, you will find about 200 leeches dead.' On the next day Mon. Sabine returned from Rouen, having found the basket at the place indicated by Alexis, with 200 of the leeches dead. The Directors of the Railroad expressed themselves doubly obliged to the somnambulist and his magnetizer, inasmuch as the proprietor of the leeches, perceiving that they were not found after twenty-five days, had stated their value to be double what it actually was.

"In the autumn of 1845, Alexis gave a series of mesmeric *séances* to the medical men of Havre, each of whom was permitted to bring one friend to witness the experiments. One of them took with him Mr. Featherstonhaugh, the Consul at Havre, who had come over the day before from California, and was a decided sceptic as to mesmerism. In order to test Alexis, Mr. Featherstonhaugh put in his pocket, enclosed in a box, a portion of a Japanese Idol which he had picked up out of the wreck of a vessel from Japan which had been lost on the coast of California during his stay there. On being asked by Mr. F., 'What have I in my pocket?' Alexis answered, 'It looks like a beetle; but it is not one, but part of a Japanese Idol with an inscription on it: you picked it up during a walk on the seashore in California, and thought at first it was some curious stone, but you afterwards perceived it was an Idol which had been washed up from the wreck of a Japanese vessel that was lost on that coast a few days before.' The relater of this was Monsieur Paravet, of Havre, to whom it was told by one of the Medical men present at the time.

"Additional Fact Relative to the Clairvoyance of Alexis."

"At a *séance* which took place before the *élite* of the society at Versailles, Dr. Bataille, one of the principal phy-

sicians of this town, placed in the hands of Alexis a letter, and requested him to describe the residence of his son, who was living at Grandville. 'Instead of giving you an account of the apartment of your son,' said Alexis, 'I am now occupied about his health, which is very bad.' 'How! Bad?' replied his interrogator. 'You have in your hand his last letter, dated six days ago, in which he states himself to be very well.' 'To morrow,' rejoined Alexis, 'you will receive a letter from his wife, announcing to you that he is very ill. I recommend you on the receipt of this to set off *immediately*, for, knowing as you do the constitution of your son, there is only you who can save him. He is very ill.' The next day the letter arrived, and Dr. Bataille immediately set off for Grandville, found his son very ill, and, after a fortnight's sojourn, succeeded in restoring him to health. On his return to Versailles this event produced a great sensation throughout the town."

"My dear Doctor,—I have called several times on M. Marcillet, but it was only to-day I met with him at home. I read to him the paper you sent me, and he declares that all therein is true. I questioned him particularly as to the fact of Cavaignac's visit. He asserts the truth of it; he is, he says, perfectly acquainted with the person of the General.

"I had before heard of the extraordinary divination of Alexis at Havre from the British Consul himself, at whose house it took place. It is, I think, mentioned in Dr. Gregory's late book; but Mr. Featherstonhaugh told me that as there related it is not in every particular correct, though it is perfectly so as to the material facts.

"Marcillet begs me to send the enclosed, published in the *Indicateur de Seine et Marne*.*

"I have to apologize to you for the delay in answering your enquiries.

* "The journals some time ago reported a serious accident which happened at the *Théâtre des Variétés* to a young lady who fell into a kind of lethargy, in which she remained above an hour without any success from the means employed, when M. Marcillet restored her in less than ten minutes by mesmeric passes.

"Another similar instance of perfect success has attended his exertions. Lately, a gentleman advanced in life, and wearing a decoration, fell down in the garden of the Tuilleries in a state of cerebral congestion. He was immediately carried to a chemist's shop in the Rue Castiglione by two soldiers of the republican guard who were passing. M. Marcillet, who by a lucky chance was on the spot, went up to the gentleman, breathed slowly upon him over his heart, and made passes over his chest and stomach, till at length, by pressing with the ends of the fingers upon the various portions of his face and neck, M. Marcillet relaxed the muscles of the mouth that had all along been contracted and rigid, and thus enabled the patient to tell his name and address. The witnesses of this sort of resurrection retired applauding the successful disciple of Mesmer."

"I sincerely trust you are well, and believe me, my dear doctor,

"Ever truly yours,

"THOMAS DAVISON.

"38, Rue Monthabor, 11th Dec., 1851."

The following is an extract from *Le Pays* of the 20th of last September, which also I had put aside:—

.. "To the Editor of *Le Pays*."

"Sir,—An old proverb says, 'better late than never:' yet I regret having so long delayed the publication of a remarkable mesmeric fact relative to myself.

"In August, 1849, one of my clerks absconded, taking with him a considerable sum from my house. The most active search by the police proved fruitless: when a friend, M. Lissant, to whom I had mentioned my misfortune, went, without apprising me, to M. Marcillet in order to consult Alexis. The following dialogue took place.

"Can you tell me, Alexis, why I am come to you?"

"You are come, Sir, to gain some tidings of a sum of money stolen from a friend by one of his clerks."

"True."

"The sum,' continued Alexis, 'is very considerable—as much as 20,000 francs.'

"That also is true."

"Alexis, considering a moment, went on to say that the name of the dishonest clerk was Dubois—that he saw Dubois at Brussels—in the *Hôtel des Princes*, where Dubois was staying.

"Set off instantly,' added Alexis, 'and you will find him at the place I have mentioned.'

"M. Lissant left for Brussels. Unfortunately he did not set off till the evening of the following day. On his arrival, he learnt that Dubois had really been staying at the *Hôtel des Princes*! but only some hours previously had quitted Brussels. Not knowing which direction to take with the prospect of overtaking the clerk, he returned to Paris, and came to my house and communicated to me the singular facts which I have just mentioned.

"Interested and curious in my turn to consult this clairvoyant, I begged my friend to take me to M. Marcillet. Alexis, being put in communication with me, declared that he saw Dubois in the gambling-house at Spa,—that Dubois was losing a great deal of money, and, at the time of his arrest, would have nothing left.

"Although this prediction was not very encouraging, I started that same evening for Spa. On arriving at Brussels, I went to M. Montigny, Secretary to the French Legation, who wished to give me a letter of introduction to the Secretary-General of Justice in Belgium, that Dubois might be arrested. But he was unable, because I had not provided myself with one from the *parquet* at Paris. I was consequently obliged to return to France for this purpose, and thus lost valuable time.

"A criminal information was then drawn up and entrusted to M. Bertrand. As soon as all the formalities were gone through, I set off afresh. On reaching Spa, I found that Dubois had quitted it some days before. Supposing that he had left the country for good, I staid in Spa but a few hours. On returning to Paris, I went immediately to Alexis.

"'You have not had much patience,' said he before I asked him a question. 'Some days ago Dubois went to Aix-la-Chapelle. He has continued gambling and has lost considerably. I see him now returning to Spa! where he will lose the little which he has left.'

"After this last information, I at once wrote to the authorities at Brussels and Spa that I had learnt that Dubois had returned to Belgium.

"Some days afterwards he was arrested at Spa.

"Exactly as Alexis had also declared, the fellow had lost all at play. At the end of four months of preventive confinement in the prison of Verviers, Dubois died there just when his extradition into France was authorized by the two powers.

"Accept, &c.

"E. PREVOST,

"*Commissionaire at the Mont de Piété,*

"9, Rue du Mouton.

"Paris, September 19, 1851."

XI. *Cure of Powerlessness of a Baby's legs and feet by one Mesmerisation.* By a LADY. Communicated by Dr. Elliotson.

"Certain it is, since the days of the Elliotson *exposure*, nothing like the present explosion has taken place: never has so signal a cheat been so utterly blown to the winds."—Mr. WAKLEY, *Lancet*, Nov. 22; p. 498.

DEAR Dr. Elliotson,—The enclosed statement describes, as well as I can do a cure effected by three or four minutes' mesmerising, on an infant of three months old; whose feet, from total want of power in the insteps, hung down in a line, with the leg. The mother, Mrs. Childs, who, as she states

had received splints to support the feet, found it perfectly impossible to keep them on so young an infant, and begged me to assist her in putting on a bandage. I wished first, however, to shew her how to mesmerise the baby's legs, and was myself surprised by seeing the feet (which hung down with the soles turned inwards) drawn up stiffly into the right position. This effect was produced in about three minutes; the rigidity, which seemed painful to the child, soon passed away, but the feet did not fall, and have continued to this time perfectly well.

It will hardly be supposed that my little patient was such a specimen of juvenile depravity as to hang down his feet in order to deceive his medical attendant, or to hold them up to impose on me: it is equally difficult to believe that the muscles gained strength suddenly *by themselves* just at the moment when my hand passed over them.

It is very pleasant to save poor little children from the discomfort and suffering of the usual remedial measures: and, if it be true, as stated by the doctor, that affections of the feet, similar to those of this child's, often result in lameness or distortion, it is most desirable that so easy and speedy a mode of cure should be made known.

The cure was effected early in August. I have this day enquired after the child, and find that it has had no return whatever of the ailment.

Yours very truly,

S. E. D M.

Dec. 16, 1851.

P.S. When I was at B——, a sweet little baby had glandular swellings: two doctors were consulted; they prescribed opposite remedies for a time, and the torture they put that dear child to made my heart ache.* I would have mesmerised it, but the mother dared not give up the *blistering ointment*, &c.; and, when she asked one doctor whether mesmerism would be useful to procure rest for the baby, he said that for so young a child it could do no harm, as it would not affect it in any way, but, if the child had been older, *it would hurt him very much*. I could do nothing, but long for more enlightenment to reach the doctors.

The following account was written out by the mother of the child whose legs were cured:—

"My baby, who was three months old, had had a weakness in his instep since he was born. His feet hung down in such a way that the soles turned inwards, and the instep was

* The barbarous and worse than useless practice!—J. ELLIOTSON.

well-being of society, that such an agent should not be left exclusively in the hands of the ignorant and thoughtless, or of designing and ill-disposed persons; but that means should be taken for affording all candid persons an opportunity of fair investigation; so that truth may be distinguished from falsehood, and a beneficial from a noxious or dangerous application of the powers which Providence has placed within our reach.

"The Committee meet every Monday evening, at 13, Anglesea Street, at eight o'clock, for the transaction of business, and the furtherance of the objects of the Association. Subscriptions and Donations will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the Treasurer, J. Gray, Esq., or any member of the Committee.

"By Order,

"I. MAC DONNELL, *Hon. Secretary.*

"The Infirmary is open daily for the attendance of patients at 13, Anglesea Street."

XVI. *More Clairvoyance in Alexis Didier.* By Dr. ELLIOTSON.

It was only in the last Number but one (January, 1852) that I gave some conclusive and remarkable recent proofs of the clairvoyance of Alexis Didier, with references to many other examples of his powers recorded in former Numbers. I understand that the following also may be relied upon, and have therefore translated and forwarded them.

"A few days ago, a money-changer in the neighbourhood of the Place Vendome, after he had exchanged a considerable sum for a person of fashionable manners, and the latter had left the office, perceived that he had overpaid 400 francs. Not admiring this, he began to consider how he should discover his customer, and noticed on the counter the piece of paper in which the money brought to him had been wrapped, and on it part of a seal which appeared to be that of a foreigner. He went to all the embassies; but in vain.

"His wife also racked her brains: and, as she had frequently consulted Alexis with advantage, she went to M. Marcillet with the piece of the wrapper. Alexis was thrown into somnambulism: and, after applying the paper first to his forehead and then to the pit of the stomach, spoke as follows.

"This piece of paper puts me in communication with a tall man, who has large moustaches—is a Russian—aide de camp to the Emperor. Stop, I perceive his residence at Paris: if you go to the *Place* of the *Madeleine*, behind the church, on the left, you will see it.' 'I know enough,' replied the lady, and departed.

"On returning home, she found her husband counting money with a man employed at the Russian Embassy. She told them what Alexis had said: and they laughed heartily and joked her on her credulity. However, the man knowing the addresses of many of the Russians in Paris, offered his assistance in tracing out the gentleman.

"When they reached the Russian Embassy, they learnt that an aide de camp of the Emperor—the Count B——, was in Paris, and living at No. 35, *Rue de la Madeleine*. They went there and observed that the house was exactly opposite the *Rue Chaveau-Lagarde*, which opens upon the *Place de la Madeleine*. They now began to think more seriously of what Alexis had said.

"The money-changer went up the stairs. But, oh what a deception! he did not recognize the gentleman whom he saw as the person for whom he was so anxiously looking, when Count B—— said to him, 'But I know you: you are the money-changer that I was with this morning.' Then, going up close to the money-changer and smiling, he took off his head an enormous chamber wig, such as many Russians wear.

"The money-changer was petrified on finding himself face to face with his debtor. The matter was soon explained; and, as the noble foreigner had not yet touched the money, they counted it over together. There were actually 400 francs too much, and these were immediately returned to the money-changer."—*La Patrie*, March 21, 1852.

"Madame V., living at No. 62, *Rue Neuve, St. Augustin*, went last Wednesday in great distress to M. Marcillet, begging for an immediate consultation with Alexis. As soon as she was put in communication with Alexis, she asked, 'Do you know what brought me here?' 'Yes, Madame; you want to know if I can find 3,130 francs for you which you have lost.'

"Alexis then gave an incredible detail of the items of this sum, saying that there were three bank notes of 1000 francs each; 100 English sovereigns, each worth 25 francs; and 30 francs in five-franc pieces and small money. Madame de V. astonished at such lucidity, begged to know who was the thief. 'Certainly,' said he: 'it is the maid-servant whom you discharged last Monday. I see her: she has broad shoulders, is short, and rather lame.' 'Go on, Alexis: that is the exact description of my former servant!' 'To find her,' continued Alexis, 'you must go to the *Barrière de Monceaux*; she is staying with one of her acquaintances in the street which ascends—stop, it is the *rue*—the *rue du*

Rocher. I see a young man with her who seems to know something about the matter. Go to this place, and you will find the woman, and the money—short, however, about 300 francs, which she has spent.’

“Madame de V. went home a moment to prepare for the search: and, on descending the stairs, she saw her old servant in the porter’s lodge. She went up to her on the pretence of making some enquiry, took her up stairs, and locked her up in the bed-room. Then, going to a police-magistrate, she related to him the singular revelations of Alexis. The magistrate, like an enlightened man, listened attentively, took her deposition in the kindest manner, strange as it might appear, and offered his assistance to visit the quarter and the street, which she pointed out, when an unexpected circumstance happened that facilitated the investigation. The porter who had carried the portmanteau of the servant, hearing what was passing, said that he had taken it to No. 11, *Rue du Rocher*. The magistrate sent the servant to this address: and Madame de V. went there herself. A careful investigation was made, which led to nothing. The servant then grew bolder, and threatened her late mistress with an action for defamation.

“In the meantime, the magistrate, continuing the investigation calmly in the midst of the servant’s vociferations, noticed a little box, locked, which he ordered to be opened. The servant became agitated at the sight of it, but declared that it did not belong to her. The landlady said the same. A smith was sent for, who put an end to this strange scene by opening the box, in which was found the exact sum stolen, short 300 francs, as Alexis had declared: but the expenditure of this sum was ascertained by the purchase of various articles of dress, accompanied by their accusing bills.

“The rest may be guessed. In the midst of so many overwhelming facts, the dishonest servant hung down her head, and was sent to the lock-up house of the police.”—*Le Siècle*, June 14, 1852.

* * Dr. Forbes, beginning by saying that Mr. Wakley had proved all the experiments with the Okeys to be delusions and the demonstrations degrading scenes and had caused a complete and melancholy explosion of them, and that all English practitioners were ashamed of the name of mesmerism,—proceeded to denounce Alexis as an impostor, and so charmed Mr. Wakley that the coroner told the world in his *Lancet* that Dr. Forbes had published a complete exposure of M. Marcillet and Alexis, and that Dr. Forbes’s report of two of their exhibitions had caused these foreigners to leave England.

The whole of Dr. Forbes’s very sad conduct in regard to Alexis

will be found in *Zoist*, No. VIII. (others of his doings are in Nos. VII., IX., X., XII., XIII., XVI.) We trust these articles will be consulted by those who write short sketches of Dr. Forbes after his death as a member of different societies, according to common custom; for by the deeds recorded in those numbers will he only be known. He is pilloried there as a dry specimen and example for all time. — *Zoist*.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

Case of Paralysis and Mania, cured by means of Animal Magnetism, in a letter to Professor Gregory, from C. M. Friedlander, M.D., Clapham, Surrey. Edinburgh, 1852.

The readiest way of making this interesting cure known would have been to publish it in *The Zoist*, instead of making it a separate pamphlet and sending it to Edinburgh. It occurred actually in London and would have occupied a sheet only, which we should cheerfully have devoted to it. The mesmeriser was M. Rousselot, the eminent performer upon the violoncello.

Letters on Mesmerism and Clairvoyance. By William Gregory, M.D., Professor of Chemistry. Reprinted from the *Edinburgh News* newspaper. Edinburgh, 1852.

These contain an abundance of striking and satisfactory facts which Dr. Gregory himself witnessed, and he did well to imitate Dr. Esdaile's plan in India and publish them first in the newspapers, thus securing the attention of the world at large in total disregard of the medical press.

A Theory of Population deduced from the general law of animal fertility. By Herbert Spencer, author of *Social Statics*. Reprinted from the *Westminster Review* for April, 1852.

This demands the perusal of all. It contains profound physiological and social views. The author urges that, the greater the development, energy, and activity of the nervous system become, the more do those of the generative system lessen: consequently that, the more man advances in civilization, the less will population increase.

"Evidently, so long as the fertility of the race is more than sufficient to balance the diminution by deaths, population must continue to increase: so long as population continues to increase, there must be pressure on the means of subsistence: and so long as there is pressure on the means of subsistence, further mental development must go on, and further diminution of fertility must result. Hence, the change can never cease until the rate of multiplication is just equal to the rate of mortality; that is—can never cease until, on the average, each pair brings to maturity but two children. Probably this involves that each pair will rarely produce more than two offspring; seeing that with the greatly-increased ability to preserve life, which the hypothesis presupposes, the amount of infant and juvenile mortality must become very small. Be this as it may, however, it is manifest that, in the end, pressure of population and its accompanying evils will entirely disappear; and will leave a state of things which will require from each individual no more than a normal and pleasurable activity. That this last inference is a legitimate corollary will become obvious on a little consideration. For, a cessation in the decrease of fertility implies a cessation in the development of the nervous system; and this implies that the nervous system has become fully equal to all that is demanded of it—has not to do more than is natural to it. But that exercise of faculties which does not exceed what is natural constitutes gratification. Consequently, in the end, the obtainment of subsistence will require just that kind and that amount of action needful to perfect health and happiness.

strictly medical in their character. Still, even with this precaution, I fear that I shall yet be charged with an intrusive interference with matters which no way become me; and perhaps I am somewhat open to that "soft impeachment;" but let me assure Dr. Holland, that, if he had not tempted me into the field by no unfrequent allusions to miraculous agencies, I should have left his theory of expectant attention to those amongst us who are far more competent to deal with it.

I remain, Mr. Editor,

Your humble servant,

GEORGE SANDBY.

XII. *Adolphe Didier's Clairvoyance.* By Mr. BARTH.

"We know but too well that popular fancy must have some vent; the days of astrology and witchcraft, of ghosts and hobgoblins, have passed away and have been succeeded by homœopathy and *clairvoyance*."—*Lancet*, Nov. 2, 1852; p. 429.

LAST summer, Lord —, who holds a commission in the Guards, called upon me, accompanied by a brother officer, to request that I would attend and mesmerise a clairvoyant for them as soon as he had arrived from Paris. One gentleman was perfectly convinced from his past experience that the clairvoyant faculty really did exist; the other was willing to be convinced if he could only obtain personally sufficient evidence. He wished to obtain the evidence afforded by the exercise not only of his reason but of his senses, and therefore Adolphe Didier (the brother of Alexis) was, at considerable expense, engaged to leave Paris for a few days and come to London. One day, soon after their visit, I received a message to go and see them as soon as possible, Adolphe Didier being expected. I arrived before Adolphe, who was perfectly a stranger to Lord —, but had been consulted a few years previously at Paris by his brother officer.

On Adolphe being announced, a quiet, retiring, well-bred man entered the apartment, and, after the customary exchange of salutations and some courteous enquiries about his journey from the gentlemen present, I proceeded to mesmerise him. Having ascertained that he had passed into the clairvoyant state, and announced that he might now be in-

are medical men practise exactly as the rest of the profession practise; but in our private practice we employ mesmerism IN ADDITION to the means ordinarily used by the medical profession." Now let the physician simply recommend "expectant attention," as a process of cure, *in addition* to the other parts of his prescription, and his patients will thank him.

terrogated, the question was put, "How shall we test him; Mr. Barth?" I replied that he must indicate how he would be tested; that no mesmeriser of experience would allow a clairvoyant to be subjected to any test which the clairvoyant objected to attempt; and therefore we would ask Adolphe Didier what he would do and then try and ascertain if he could do it, subjecting him to as rigid a testing process as we could devise. On putting the question, Adolphe said he would read in a book without having the book presented him; or would visit and describe any distant place; and would try and do anything required provided it was not insisted upon if he found that he was unable to oblige them. Lord — directly reached (*quite at random*) a book from a shelf, and, holding it behind him, asked, "What book have I now in my hand?" Adolphe Didier in a few seconds replied, "*Voyage en Suisse*." The inquirer immediately held up the book that we might perceive that Didier had correctly read the gilt lettering on its back. Placing the book behind him again and without opening it, he requested that Adolphe would read the four first lines on page 27. Adolphe immediately repeated several sentences in French. On opening the book and turning to page 27, we found that Adolphe had correctly read four lines from the 27th page of a closed book, held behind his querist, entirely out of all the possible range of natural vision. He then went mentally to a nobleman's residence in one of the midland counties, and described it most accurately even to the pictures and the costumes of the portraits hanging in the dining-hall.

An hour before my interview with Adolphe, I was at the house of a lady patient, where my servant found me and gave me Lord —'s note, asking my immediate attendance. This lady had lost a very valuable and much prized brilliant ring, which she was anxious to know something about. As I happened on perusing my note to say that I must now go and mesmerise Adolphe Didier, the French clairvoyant, the lady remarked, "I wish he could tell you about a ring, which was stolen from me two years ago." I rejoined that I would, if an opportunity occurred, ask him about it; that I did not know anything of his method of perceiving, but that if she wrote her name on a piece of paper I would give it to him and try if he could make out her wishes or discover anything respecting the lost article. I now placed this piece of paper in his hand. He put it to his lips and on his forehead; and, after a short interval of apparent reflection, he stated that it was written by a lady, whom he described correctly; and that she wanted to know about a lost ring. He then described

the ring; the apartment from which it was taken; what articles were in the box where it had been previously deposited; who had taken it; and where it was pawned; adding that it would not be recovered unless the pawnbroker would admit having received it and declare where he had disposed of it.

His description of the lady; of the apartment; of the box, and the various articles contained therein, one article being very curious and having therefore puzzled him much, *were all perfectly correct*: the person who he stated had taken it is deceased. There was some difficulty in ascertaining the pawnbroker indicated by him. The party who was presumed to be meant denied ever having taken in pledge any ring of so great a value, and thus verification of the latter part of his statement was not possible. This was not cerebral sympathy or thought-reading. The particulars were totally unknown to any one present, and the event to which they referred had taken place two years previously. It is somewhat curious and corroboratory, that, on Alexis Didier being asked in Paris, and Ellen Dawson subsequently in London, also respecting the ring, they each described the same person as having stolen it. For these three clairvoyants each to have described the same person and circumstances without a possibility of any of them knowing what the others had said, is a fact somewhat too remarkable to be accounted for on the ground of "extraordinary coincidence," or "fortunate guess work."

I had several other opportunities of testing Adolphe's powers, and found him a very good clairvoyant, far superior to the average in the extent or range of his powers, but, like all others who do not confine their faculty to one special purpose, occasionally liable to be in error. I will add an account of the first experience of Lord ——'s friend with Adolphe. As the narrator is a gentleman and an officer in Her Majesty's service, and mentioned the following circumstances in sober earnest, we are bound, I presume, to accept it as truth, particularly as there are many analogous cases in the pages of mesmeric works to corroborate it.

About four years ago the narrator called on Adolphe in Paris, never having previously seen him. When Adolphe was put to sleep, the question was asked, "Can you, M. Adolphe tell me my name and where I come from?" In a few seconds Adolphe replied, "You come from England, and your name is Monsieur ——," both being correct. Adolphe might easily have perceived that his visitor was an Englishman, but to hit clairvoyantly on his surname was a feat that very few clairvoyants have ever accomplished. The next

remark was, "M. Adolphe! I have now in my pocket a letter, can you tell me anything of its contents, or the circumstances to which it relates?" Adolphe presently replied, "You have received that letter from London, from a military commandant,—from a place where military business is transacted; in it he tells you that your commission is ready for you if you can pass the proper examination; and that you are to go to a place—a brick building which I can see a good way from London, to be examined next Tuesday." The letter was an official letter containing the very information which Adolphe gave, and which might have been obtained by thought-reading, as the questor knew the contents of the letter in his pocket; but that which follows was pre-vision, which is more extraordinary and not easily accounted for as a power. Having told the substance of the letter, Adolphe added, "But you need not go to England till next Tuesday, because you will not pass your examination." The gentleman exclaimed, "What! shall I be rejected?" "No," replied Adolphe; "you will not be rejected—you will not pass." The interrogator could not comprehend this; and remarked that if he did not pass he must be rejected. Adolphe said, "You will not pass on Tuesday—you will not be rejected—you need not leave Paris—you will pass your examination and get your commission, but not on Tuesday." Of course M. — did not heed this admonition of Adolphe, but hastened to London, and reached Sandhurst on the Tuesday morning as ordered. However, when he presented himself with his official letter to the examiner, it was found that, through some oversight of secretaries or clerks, his name had not been inserted in the list of names forwarded to them from the Horse Guards, and that consequently he could not be examined. He applied to the proper authorities; the mistake was rectified; he passed his examination a few days afterward, and received the commission which he now holds. Thus all that Adolphe Didier pre-vised was verified by the event; the question still remains, "*How did he know it?*"

Gentlemen, I beg leave to hand you the above for *The Zoist* should you have room for its insertion, and am,

Gentlemen, your obedient servant,

GEORGE BARTH,

4, Mornington Crescent, Dec. 4, 1852.

To the Editors of *The Zoist*.

Postscript to Mr. Barth's Case of Clairvoyance by Dr. Elliotson.

Two months ago I received a letter from the Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend, dated Oct. 6, Mon Loisir, Lausanne, from which the following is an extract:—

"At Geneva I saw the brother of Alexis, Adolphe Didier, and, having mesmerised him, I asked him to see an acquaintance of mine at Lausanne. I did not mention whether man or woman, but he saw the person I meant, namely, my cousin, Miss —, and said she was going out to ride, describing her appearance, dress, &c., and her house, very distinctly. *Everything* he said was verified on my return to Lausanne. He also saw me speaking to her before I left Lausanne, and had an *anterior* vision of what really *had* taken place—a fact I never before remarked. A friend of mine, a Mr. Lawrence, a great believer in mesmerism, also shewed me a girl in somnambulism—a genuine case, with which you would have been delighted. Her extase was beautiful, and (like the Okeys) she was immediately arrested and stiffened by a pass made at a distance *behind her back*. I wanted — to see Adolphe, and took him to — (who was then at Geneva). He wanted Adolphe to see (in clairvoyance) a house near Sevenoaks that he (—) once possessed, but had not seen for some years. The experiment was not a happy one. Adolphe was (I think) wonderful *at first*, but got puzzled, and then the incredulity of — and — destroyed the clairvoyance, and — went away *triumphant* at the failure!! 'Neither would he be persuaded though one rose from the dead,' as — truly said.

"There is a curious story that M. Woodley de Cerjat wanted you to know. I believe he wrote it to Dickens to tell you again. However I may as well repeat it.

"A young lady, a friend of M. Cerjat's, who had been with her family at Lausanne, was taken ill at Berne with typhus fever. Her doctor found her one day in a lucid interval (she was generally delirious), but no sooner had he touched her hand than she seemed to pass into an extraordinary state, and cried out, 'Oh that poor child! that poor little boy! Why did you cut his head open? How is he now?' The doctor, astonished, replied, 'I left him well; I hope he will recover,' and tried to calm the patient. But, when he got out of the room, he said, 'That was the most extraordinary thing I ever knew in my life: I am just come from trepanning a boy whose head had been injured, but there was no human means by which Miss — could have known it, as I am only this moment come direct from the boy here and no one knew of the accident, nor had Miss —'s nurse ever left the room.' The explanation seems to be that the *touch* of the doctor's hand threw the young lady into clairvoyance. She is since dead, and M. de Cerjat attended her funeral."

There is not time to ask for Mr. Townshend's permission

to print these extracts from his letter: but seeing Mr. Barth's communication I cannot resist, and trust Mr. Townshend will pardon me.—JOHN ELLIOTSON.

XIII. *Observations on the conduct of Dr. Robertson, Mr. Terry, surgeon, and the Vicar of St. Sepulchre's, Northampton.*

"To me it seems that those divines who suffer this *insidious jugglery* to steal among their flocks under the garb of physiology, which *spurns and despises* it, betray their trust." "How much more seriously will the people have to murmur, if the working clergy themselves, *abandoning common sense*, and their awful regard of miracles, tolerate, teach, and testify to an *art worthy only of the priests of Baal*!"—Dr. Hull, of Norwich. *Clairvoyance and the Clergy*, p. 16.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ZOIST.

SIR,—I feel induced to trouble you with a few remarks upon the subject of the late mesmeric proceedings at Northampton on account of the discreditable circumstances which led to Mr. Millington's resignation of the curacy of St. Sepulchre's.

The report which appeared in the last number of *The Zoist*, to the truthfulness of which I can bear my strongest testimony, will sufficiently show the spirit in which the subject was treated by the opposite parties. Mr. Millington, I conceive, was actuated by the most creditable and praiseworthy motives in delivering a lecture on the "Phenomena of Dreams, Mesmerism, Clairvoyance," &c.; that lecture was highly appreciated by a very large and respectable attendance, lay and clerical, both from the town and neighbourhood; and there can be no doubt that it was extremely useful in turning into a profitable channel the intense excitement which had previously been created upon the subject by itinerant lecturers in the town.

He has acted, I think, most wisely in publishing the lecture; its ability and spirit will speak for themselves, and its Christian principles will totally refute the unfounded calumnies that were circulated against him by parties from whom we might have expected better things, especially as they were just as ignorant of the lecture itself as of the subject matter upon which it treated.

The very *announcement* of the lecture called forth a public censure, which was followed up by a kind of indirect attack in one of the local newspapers from a surgeon in the town, who no doubt was greatly incited thereto by the kindred indignation of Dr. Robertson, who took the lead in the very

with any bandage, I expressed my dissatisfaction at the result thus far. A little later a physician who had accompanied me drew from his pocket a number of the *Gazette des Hôpitaux*, of which I placed the title in contact with her occiput, and asked her to read the line. She complained of being fatigued by the previous questions of the company, but said she would try; and after requesting me to think of the words, said the first letter was a G. She could not, however, distinguish the others, and desired to be awakened. Now, as may be supposed, I had taken good care that she could not possibly have a glimpse of the paper, and if for argument's sake it were to be conceded that she might have guessed the right letter, it must at least be allowed that the guess would have been a good one when the chances were twenty-four to one against it.

Another somnambulist, Virginie, who had repeatedly given proofs of great lucidity in describing localities, on being placed *en rapport* with an ecclesiastic of the seminary of Toulouse, proceeded to describe the town, his church, and residence. She was right in some particulars, such as the street leading to the principal square, the colour of the houses which are of brick, there being no steeple to the church, &c.; but was at fault in several others. She was subsequently placed in relation with a gentleman who wished her to describe his château. After some generalities which were correct, she attempted to enter more into particulars, and said truly that on ascending two steps a large room was on the right, which he said was the billiard-room; she also said that there were four windows in it, correctly described the colour of the walls, around which were pictures, but could not make out some piece of furniture between the rooms, though she appeared to try hard; neither could she perceive any billiard-table; though, as the gentleman had mentioned it was the billiard-room, if there were any deception, one would naturally suppose the billiard-table would have been the first thing named. In some other attempts she was unsuccessful.

These results are, however, insignificant compared with those presented by the next subject—Alexis,

EDWIN LEE (1848) ANIMAL MAGNETISM AND
THE ASSOCIATED PHENOMENA, SOMNAMBULANCE,
CLAIRVOYANCE, ETC.

whose name is now pretty well known in England. After being magnetised, and presenting the more ordinary phenomena of cataleptic rigidity of parts, insensibility to stimuli, &c., he became lucid, presenting the peculiarity of hearing what was said by other persons as well as the one *en rapport* with him.

After some of the visitors had questioned him, I placed myself in relation with him, and while holding his hand, gave him a card of Dr. Davison's, asking him to read it, the printed part being reversed and in contact with his hand; he carried it to his nose and forehead, and after some efforts mentioned the three first letters. I then desired that his eyes should be bandaged, and the magnetiser took from a drawer a piece of thick woolly padding, such as is used by tailors for padding of coats, about ten inches long and six broad, and offered it to any of the company to apply. I availed myself of the opportunity, and placed it over his eyes in such a manner that the lower edge came down nearly to the aperture of the nostrils; over this a folded handkerchief was tied firmly round the head, and it was then proposed that he should play *écarté* with any of the company; a gentleman accordingly offered himself, and two packs of cards (one with red, and other with green backs,) were produced, and were used alternately every game. The somnambulist had, meanwhile, still continued his efforts to read Dr. Davison's card, which he at last accomplished, calling it, however, Davignon. While playing, he named the cards which he cut or played, followed the suit with correctness, and repeatedly mentioned the cards which his adversary held in his hand, saying at the beginning that he had won or lost, as the case might be, and was only mistaken two or three times. During one of the games a gentleman present who had not witnessed anything of the kind before, substituted his card for that of Dr. Davison's, which lay upon the table. The somnambulist was soon aware of the exchange, and after touching the gentleman's hand, mentioned the first letter of the new one, though the name was in contact with the table, and was consequently unknown to the company. After requesting the owner of the card, (Le Cte. de

Balincourt,) to think of his name, he said he would tell a letter after each deal. On pronouncing the two last letters of the second word, and winning at the same time a game, he said, *cela fait le compte*, thus punning upon the word; and at last succeeded in mentioning the name except the *de*, which he omitted. Another visiting card was likewise presented to him, which he read more quickly, as his lucidity appeared to increase. A lady then took the gentleman's place as his adversary, and the results were repeated during several games to the satisfaction and astonishment of all present. On one occasion, after he had proposed, the lady dealt him four fresh cards, and while they lay with their faces upon the table, he said, without touching them, "It is of no use playing; I have lost; they are only spades and diamonds." I turned the cards up, and there were in fact two spades and two diamonds. During an intermission in the playing, I drew a card from the pack without looking at it myself, and asked him to name it; he said, "It is a king;" but when I had ascertained that he was mistaken, he said, "No, it is a ten," which was true: I asked him which ten; he said, a black ten, and first mentioned the ten of clubs, whereas it was spades. I then folded down the number of the Gazette des Hôpitaux, and asked him to read a line in moderately large type. He first placed the paper upon his epigastrium, then to his forehead, and holding my hand, said the first letter was an L, requesting me, at the same time, to think well of the words, which I did, and he pronounced them *Lit de Nicole*, this being the heading of an advertisement. All the time of the card-playing, the magnetiser was at a distance.

After he had reposed a little while, attempts were made to test his capabilities of describing the residences or friends of the persons who placed themselves *en rapport* with him; and although he made several mistakes, and often corrected himself, his descriptions were acknowledged by the parties to be generally true, especially his account of the appearance and disposition of the father of one of the ladies, who was at Abbeville, and also that of the apartment of M. C., a physician, in whose antechamber he perceived, among other things,

a skeleton, and stated its place with reference to other objects. He likewise described the sitting-room, as well as a picture suspended in it, in which last attempt, however, he had considerable difficulty, though he at last succeeded, placing himself in the attitude of the person represented, which was that of an eminent physician, whose name, he said, he saw beneath, though he could not read it. A name was admitted to be beneath the picture, but it was that of the painter. He could not for a long time state what was in the hand, and first said it was something round, a skull : after several efforts, he exclaimed, "Ah ! he has something in both hands, and that is what confuses me ; something round in the left hand, and something long in the right." It was then stated by the gentleman that the portrait was depicted holding a heart in his left hand, and demonstrating it with an instrument in his right.

Although there was no reason to doubt the good faith of this gentleman any more than that of others of the company, who had put questions to him, and had been satisfied with the exactness of his answers, I had not come merely to see what should be done by others, and accordingly placed myself again in relation with him, upon which he complained, as he had likewise done while his eyes were bandaged, of being annoyed by the white and blue stones on my breast, meaning the pins in my cravat, which were pearls set in blue enamel. I asked him to describe my apartment, which, after having been told the street, he proceeded to do, saying at first it was upon the third floor. I requested him to tell me the number, upon which he counted slowly up to seven, at which he stopped, and then said, "How stupid I am ! it is not so much, it is No. 1, which was perfectly correct, this apartment being on the ground-floor, *to which I had only moved a few days before from No. 7, on the third floor.*" He then described the apartment with tolerable accuracy, making, however, two or three mistakes, such as saying at first that the bed was on the right on entering, and the windows on the left, though he speedily corrected himself, and reversed their position, which was the right one. He likewise stated the position of the *secrétaire*, but said it was open, which was not the case. He mentioned, however, most of the pecu-

liarities without being questioned. For instance, he said there were two rooms; that the smaller was reached by passing through the larger one; that there was a very small passage before entering the larger room from the court; that this room contained the bed, and two windows, though when he asked he did not state correctly the position of the fireplace, with respect to the windows. He said the smaller room had but one window looking on to the court, that he saw in it a toilette table, and a large black trunk, which was also true; (the trunk having been left there by the former occupant of the apartment,) and that there was a sort of passage between the two rooms. While describing, he told me two or three times to think well of the apartment, as he had done with respect to the line which I had previously asked him to read. He, moreover, said I had left something on the night-table close to the bed, and on my stating that I was not aware of having done so, repeated with decision that he saw something, he thought it was some paper. As I could not fail to be struck with his accuracy in other points of the description, I was curious on arriving at home to see whether there was in fact anything upon the night-table, to which my first look was directed on entering, and on the marble slab which forms its top, there lay a large piece of the end of the white bed-curtain, which usually hangs by its side, and which I had never before observed to be there.

While describing, he was very positive upon some points, sometimes contradicting the person when told he was wrong; upon some other points he was not equally positive, and corrected himself. For example, having mentioned that there was a well to the right of the house of a gentleman *en rapport* with him, he was contradicted, but persisted in his assertion, upon which the gentleman's wife said the somnambulist was correct, that the well was to the right on coming from the house; on the husband making some reply, the slight altercation was terminated by the somnambulist saying that the well lay north of the house, in which both husband and wife agreed.

The card playing was carried on throughout with a quickness which could not have been exceeded by an expert player, and though he now and then made a slight

mistake, such as taking one court card for another, he did not once revoke, but led off the proper cards, followed his adversary's suit with precision, and generally after the first or second card had been played, he told whether he had gained or lost the other tricks, mentioning the cards in his adversary's hand, and once, when some of the red cards got mixed with the green ones, he sorted them out without any hesitation.

Two days afterwards, having applied the cotton and bandage to the eyes, I drew a paper from my pocket, on which were some printed characters in moderately large type. He made out in a little while the larger word, *magnetisme*, but had more difficulty in decyphering the rest, which however he accomplished, "*Traitement des Maladies par le Magnetisme*," being the words. I then opened a book, and gave him the heading of a chapter to read. He made out the words; *Des Lotteries Allemandes*, sooner than he had done the previous ones. The magnetiser then proposed that he should describe some distant locality of which I should think. I mentioned my apartments in London, of which the somnambulist proceeded to attempt the description, and was correct in some points, such as that the house was in a street which opened into a very wide street or road, that they were on the ground-floor, the staircase being continued beyond, that the entrance to the sitting-room was to the left of the passage, and at the further end of the room; that there were two windows, and the fire-place was to the right in entering; that there was only one window in the bed-room; in the more minute details, however, he was frequently at fault. I next asked him about Wiesbaden, where I have passed several summers. He said, on arriving into the town the passage was along a handsome street, that the hotel at which I descended, was on the left of the street and in a square: on my inquiry as to whether it was large or small, he said very large; the Hotel des Quatre Saisons being in fact in the situation he described, forming a corner of the Wilhelm Strasse and one side of the square, and is, with one or two exceptions, the largest hotel with which I am acquainted. I told him that I did not remain more than a day or two in the hotel but took apartments, which he said, with truth, were in a lodging-house in the

principal street; that there were houses only on one side of the street, that they were not high; that the look out was upon some large trees and the promenade; which any one who has been there, would acknowledge to be a correct description. He further said that the promenade turned off at an angle, and that on each side of the other part he saw a raised terrace, doubtless in allusion to the colonnades, to which the ascent is by four or five steps. He said, however, that there was a monument or statue in the square, which was incorrect, and made a mistake in two or three other particulars.

At the third *seance* there was again a tolerably large assemblage of persons, and among them a gentleman who produced a sealed letter, the contents of which he was pretty confident the somnambulist would not be able to make out. I had the day before mentioned to an incredulous physician who had not previously seen any similar experiments, that they were to be repeated; he accordingly came at the beginning. After the exhibition of rigidity and insensibility to pricking the rigid limbs, I again applied the padding over the eyes, while Dr. — tied the bandage; on some one's inquiring if it could not slip, the somnambulist appeared annoyed, and asked for a second handkerchief, which I placed below the other, so as to leave only the end of the nose free, and below this the padding protruded on each side lower than the nostrils. Dr. — expressed himself satisfied that he could not see anything, and the *ecarté* playing was again proposed; a gentleman producing a pack of cards which he had brought with him, inclosed in the government envelope. As the pack was entire, the low cards had to be taken out, which the magnetiser asked the somnambulist to do; he said, however, that his lucidity was not yet sufficient, and declined. On cutting for the first deal, he at once said to his adversary, without turning the cards towards himself, "It is your deal," and, as on the former occasion, selected his cards, playing to his adversary's suit, and leading off with precision, naming the cards in his adversary's hand, and consequently telling whether he had lost or won: now and then, however, mistaking a knave or a queen for a king. During one deal, at the expressed wish of the magnetiser, he played to his adversary's suit, and led off correctly while the cards still lay with their faces on the table

without taking them into his hand. I then produced my passport, doubling it down opposite the heading, and asked him to read the first words; he first spelt the word *nom*, and then began afresh, mentioning each letter of the words, *Au nom du roi*, till the last, which he pronounced without spelling. I then asked him again the number of my apartment, which he repeated was No. 1. But, I said, there are two numbers one; what is there to distinguish mine from the other, what is there on the key? he replied, there is a letter hanging to the key. What letter? He first pronounced A; passing quickly over it, but hesitated a little at B, then said C, and with decision, "It is a C;" which was true. The gentleman had previously given his sealed letter, which he undertook to decypher, and after some trials, said it is writing, which was denied, though it appeared on opening the letter that the letters and figures were in writing. He then said there was a picture and some figures; on being asked how many figures, he said five. He was then asked the letters; of which there were several small ones, not forming words, and four capitals. He named three of the capitals, which on opening the paper were found to be correct, as also a small coloured picture, which had been enveloped in the paper containing the letters and figures. He was then awakened.*

* *Extract from a Letter to M. Marcillet.*

"Although I had formerly attended magnetic seances in which some surprising results had been obtained, I had, I confess, doubts respecting the reality of the faculty possessed by certain somnambulists, of transporting themselves mentally, to places which they had never seen, and which were known only to those with whom they were placed in relation. I was, there, strongly desirous of ascertaining how far they might be relied upon in this respect, and the trial has been so satisfactory, so complete, that I can scarcely believe that which I have seen and heard. The young Alexis has, at my request, described to me my country residence, (situated an hundred leagues from Paris,) and the details with a marvellous exactness; the appearance of the country, the remarkable objects, the shape of the buildings, the nature and the position of the furniture, nothing escaped this second sight. It seemed as if an immense picture was unfolded to the eyes of the somnambulist, and that he had only to indicate its different parts. He sometimes hesitated in his answers, but always in order to arrive more surely at the truth, always leaving me in the most extreme surprise, I may say in stupefaction.

"I am, your very humble servant,

"GEORGE ONSLOW,

"Paris, April 21, 1843."

"Member of the Institute."

These are merely a few of the occurrences which I reported at the time, and have since repeatedly witnessed analogous ones daily shown in private parties.—The somnambulist, with his eyes bandaged, playing with any one who choosed to offer himself, reading printed and written lines, and describing localities; though Alexis, as well as other somnambulists, was often at fault. I think no one who had witnessed these experiments so frequently repeated, would be disposed to ascribe them to trickery or accidental guessing, as might be the case were there only two or three isolated instances; for referring merely to the trials which I made myself, will it be asserted, that any one in their normal state, and with the free use of their eyes, could have done what I have stated? that the female should have guessed the letter G, of the Gazette des Hospitaux,—that Alexis should by chance, or from seeing them, have read the words which I desired him,—that he should have mentioned the peculiarities of my apartment, as well as of other residences, without any leading questions being put to him? Supposing, for instance, I had asked, is there a trunk in my room; in which room is it, and what is its colour? the chances would have been at least equal to his guessing wrong as right; whereas, his stating the circumstances correctly was the rule, and the mistakes which he frequently corrected the rare exception. It must also be allowed, that his positively affirming there was something on the night-table of which I was not aware, and without any allusion to this piece of furniture on my part, and my perceiving on arriving at home the unusual circumstance of its being covered with a piece of the curtain, cannot be ascribed to mere coincidence.

On one occasion, having correctly described the apartment of a gentleman *en rapport*, he stated that there was on the table a rosewood box. The gentleman admitted having such a box, which, however, he affirmed was in a cupboard. Alexis, however, was positive that it was upon the table, which the gentleman, on arriving at home, found to be the case, his servant having taken it from the cupboard in order to get at something behind it, and having forgotten to replace it. Some people might consider this to be collusion, nevertheless it is in accordance with

other analogous facts ; and one of the kind occurred with respect to myself, for on another occasion, after having described my apartment in London, he said that on the drawers in the bed-room there was a quantity of books, which I denied, saying, that I had a good many books, but they were on a table in a sitting-room. On my returning, I found everything as I had left it, but the next day my landlady said, that since I had been away, the opportunity had been taken of putting the place properly to rights, cleaning, &c., stating that such and such things were put in different places, which she named ; and that the books were placed on the drawers in the bed-room.

On the occasion of the visit of Alexis and his magnetiser to London, much incredulity was manifested during the *seances*, by some of those present, which, together with the somnambulist's powers being overtasked, occasioned failure of the experiments in some instances, though they perfectly succeeded in others. In consequence of what was then said, that the imposition had been detected, &c. I was desirous of ascertaining, when passing through Paris some months afterwards, whether Alexis had in fact experienced any diminution of his powers. I accordingly attended a *seance* which was appointed for several students of the Polytechnic School, and found the somnambulist as lucid as ever, playing cards with blind-folded eyes, indicating to one of the students the name on his desk, and the contents of the desk ; telling another the particular street, and the name of the optician where he had bought some spectacles a few days previously, and mentioning the contents of a button of the school uniform which he had previously prepared, viz., a wafer and a piece of glass, which, on removing the soldering, were taken out. On placing myself *en rapport*, holding a card in my hand, Alexis stated the first letter, then the whole name on the card, *Laroudé*, saying with truth, it was that of a *marchand de nouveautés*, in the Rue de la Paix, on the left hand side on going from the Boulevards, nearly opposite the Royal Printing Office, and that I had been there two days ago buying some (at first he said *cravattes*, but speedily corrected himself) gloves ; all which was correct.

Having been obliged to leave London by his Paris en-

agements, M. Marcillet, the magnetiser, was very desirous of returning, in order to refute some of the statements which had been made respecting his departure, in consequence, as was said, of the detection of the imposition, but was prevented in consequence of Alexis taking it into his head to accept an engagement as an actor in one of the provincial theatres. I understood, however, that he subsequently returned to Paris, resuming his exhibitions.

A few days ago I received a letter from a highly estimable gentleman, who has given much of his attention to animal magnetism, from which I will read an extract, referring to this somnambulist's description of a bank-note :*

"I consider clairvoyance to be a most difficult subject for discussion, particularly when subjecting that uncertain and fluctuating faculty to an *experimentum cruci*, such as reading *all* the words on a bank-note on any particular day. I am quite satisfied that clairvoyance is a truth in nature, and have arrived at that conclusion after witnessing a very great number of successful experiments, as well as very many failures. I have seen Alexis, the French somnambulist, surrounded and tested by numbers of hard-headed sceptics, and yet succeed in every experiment; and a few days afterwards with every apparent advantage in his favour, the faculty totally deserted him. A sceptical medical man once placed in Alexis' hand a leather note-case inclosed in paper, and sealed. Alexis declared he saw two kinds of papers inside,—one with printing, the other with writing on it; that in the latter was written the two letters T : L : with a colon after each letter; that on the printed paper was the picture of a queen with flowers round it, and behind the picture the word England. Mr. — opened the note-case, and took out a Bank of England note folded three times, and enclosed in a paper, on which was written the letters T : L :, and on the other side some words which Alexis did not perceive, and of all the words on the bank-note, the only one he decyphered was the word England, which he said was *behind* the picture of a queen, which picture was, doubtless, the figure of Britannia. Many people have asked, *why* Alexis could not say at once that the printed paper was a

* Captain James.

bank-note, and read all the words as well as the word England, and the letters T: L. My answer is simply that I do not know."

As an instance of the influence of circumstances which oppose themselves to the manifestations of clairvoyance, I may mention, that on witnessing the experiments I have narrated, the previously incredulous physician who accompanied me, suggested, that in order to convince the members of the Medical Society, it would be very satisfactory if Alexis would exhibit before them. On my proposing this to the magnetiser, he said, "Certainly, we do not wish these things to be done in a corner, but court the investigation of the scientific, and those most competent to judge of their value." Alexis, however, who was then awake, objected, saying, that he was apprehensive that the presence of so many incredulous persons would prevent his succeeding. After my departure from Paris, I received a letter from a friend, saying, that he had been induced to consent,—but that, as had been anticipated, failure was the consequence. "The president of our society," says the letter, "engaged Marcillet and Alexis to perform at his house about a fortnight since, and invited many of the members, that they might have an opportunity of forming their own conclusions. The rooms were warm and crowded, and the people almost hemmed in the magnetiser and his subject. Scarcely had the experiments commenced, when one person, Dr. L., made some absurd objections, and expressed his utter disbelief in mesmerism. In fact the conduct of the majority was such, that it is not surprising Alexis was altogether wanting in clairvoyance; in place of one name, he gave another; and the other experiments were not more successful." Nothing, however, could more strongly evince the good faith and confidence of the magnetiser, than his readiness to allow the somnambulist to try his powers under such unfavourable circumstances.

This order of phenomena, it must be obvious, is altogether different from the more purely physical effects of magnetism, which may even be produced upon animals. Dr. Wilson, physician to the Middlesex Hospital, published an account of the experiments which he made in the Zoological Gardens, showing that elephants and other

animals were variously affected by his magnetising, and fish even became so passive under its influence, as to allow themselves to be touched and taken in the hand. Clairvoyance may be, in part, explained by the mental *rapport* which exists between the parties, enabling the somnambulist to divine the thoughts of the person when concentrated upon the particular subject to be designated; whether it be words written or printed, enclosed in envelopes, peculiarities distinguishing individuals, the description of distant localities or other tests; and this is evident from the circumstance of somnambulists requesting the parties to think of what they wish described. This explanation, however, does not suffice for those instances in which circumstances are mentioned unknown to the person *en rapport*, and even sometimes opposed to his convictions. Thus, in card-playing with the eyes securely bandaged, somnambulists have no hesitation in playing the cards in their own hand, and can even frequently mention cards turned down, or written words, while in contact with the table. In the instances also which I have adduced of the rosewood box upon the table in the gentleman's room, the books upon the drawers in my bedroom, and the piece of white curtain upon the top of the night-table, there must have been a positive perception analogous to what I have already adverted to as occasionally taking place in natural somnambulism, and in dreaming; and in the present state of our knowledge, only to be explained in the same manner. "In the words of Epicharmus," says the author of *Isis Revelata*, (the first work on animal magnetism published in this country in recent times,)—"the mind sees, the mind hears; everything else is deaf or blind. If the phenomena observed are calculated to excite our wonder, to call forth our scepticism,—if they appear to be inexplicable and irreconcilable with any of our previous notions, let us remember that the cause of this may be found in the narrowness and imperfection of our preconceived systems, and this consideration should lead us to a careful review of the principles of our knowledge, rather than to an obstinate and irrational denial of the facts presented to us by experience." "It will be seen, on a superficial examination, that animal